CONTROLLED POWER

A STUDY OF LAZINESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

ARTHUR HOLMES

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MIND AND HEALTH SERIES

Edited by H. Addington Bruce, A.M.

CONTROLLED POWER

A STUDY OF LAZINESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

BY

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

THE inclusion in this medical handbook series of an analytical study of laziness and achievement may at first thought seem puzzling. Yet such a study logically finds place here in view of the important part that work, rightly considered, plays in the conservation of health.

The trouble is that comparatively few people rightly consider work. To the great majority, it may safely be said, work is an evil to be endured only so long as it cannot be evaded. Work evasion is the rule with multitudes, who from the heart are ready to cry with Charles Lamb:

> "Who first invented work, and bound the free
> And holyday-rejoicing spirit down. . . .
> To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood?
> Sabbathless Satan!"

But the fact is that, so far from being an evil, work is one of man's greatest boons.

It was given man, not for his hurt, but for his good. Evading work, he actually invites troubles of many kinds, including bodily disorders. More specifically, to repeat what I stressed in my book of several years ago, "Self-Development:"

"Nature has so designed things that when a man habitually avoids work some one or all of the health-maintaining processes are disturbed. Partial compensation, it is true, may be gained through energetic play. But the man disinclined to work is usually also disinclined to energetic play. And, in any event, he cannot obtain through habitual play the contentment which comes with regular, systematic work. That is how Nature circumvents those who would, day in and out, substitute play for work.

"Dissatisfaction gradually takes possession of their minds. Consciously or subsconciously they appreciate that they are not doing the right thing, and they become restless, uneasy, unhappy. Then they begin to starve as surely as though they failed to eat food sufficient for the body's needs."

And, in substantiation of the above:

"Idlers tested by the methods of modern science have again and again been found suffering from a peculiarly weakened condition of the nervous system, with poor circulation, a slow heart beat, and low blood pressure. Their complaint that they feel too tired to work is thus well grounded. They are tired because they are afflicted with the weakness of starvation."

It is notorious that nervous ills beset the habitually idle. The semi-idle suffer likewise; as, for that matter, do those who work hard enough in all conscience but by faulty methods, or in the rebellious spirit of one who detests the work he finds himself obliged to do. Everything depends, in fact, both for health and for achievement, on the spirit in which one works. It is among the prime purposes of this book to make clear this truth, and to make clear also how a man who has to confess himself averse from work may best go about acquiring that zest for it which he must have if he is to get the most out of life and make the most of himself as a living being.

But indeed, as Doctor Holmes rightly emphasizes, the desire for work-evasion, in one word laziness, itself demands explanation. The popular belief that it is merely an acquired bad habit is almost as mistaken as the popular notion of work. There are many causes of laziness—so many that one might more correctly speak of lazinesses rather than of laziness. Sometimes laziness has its roots in physical defects, sometimes in disease—as in the now well-recognized hookworm laziness, concerning which Doctor Holmes speaks in detail—sometimes in faulty training methods.

Often laziness is more seeming than real. Thus we have the partial laziness of childhood, the so-called laziness of adolescence when rapidity of growth interferes with exertion, the laziness of the fatigued and of the mentally weak, in whose case laziness really is a defense reaction to protect a feeble organism; and the laziness of inventiveness, a sign not so much of unwillingness to work as of a laudable ingenuity. So, too, there is a laziness born solely of false standards of success, of an ambition

less lofty than ambition ought always to be. Nor does this enumeration exhaust by any means the varieties and causes of laziness, as readers of Doctor Holmes's book will discover.

They will discover also that he approaches the many and complex problems of laziness and achievement not from the point of view of the academic theorist but from that of the humanist who would be practically helpful. A professor of psychology, he has specialized in that clinical psychology—the study and treatment of the mentally retarded and the socially difficult—calculated not only to augment his knowledge but to broaden and intensify his sympathies. For nearly fifteen years, moreover, Doctor Holmes has had to deal with life problems of students in the University of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania State College. And, as a psychological adviser and in other capacities, he has had contacts in the world of business giving him still further insight into the perplexities, difficulties, and possibilities of mankind.

Thus he has become qualified to write—

as he does write—with a truly sympathetic understanding. Not didactically, but as one who would sincerely help, does he address his readers. His book is alive with friendliness. More than this, throughout its pages there sounds a practical idealism, refreshing and invigorating in our modern welter of a practicality often sordid in its aims and an idealism that stultifies itself by its impracticality. It is to me a source of genuine satisfaction that it has been possible to include Doctor Holmes's book in the Mind and Health Series.

H. Addington Bruce.

PREFACE

Power in all its forms has been an object of desire by many people in all ages. The elementary power of self-control as exhibited in the directing of our own activities is one form of this sought-for power which everyone should acquire by inheritance or by development.

That it is a power which can be developed modern science feels certain. Physical and mental hygiene are full of rules and regulations telling how health can be attained. It is not so generally clear, however, how the healthy body and the normal mind, once acquired, can be controlled for the greatest efficiency. This book undertakes to point out the way.

As far as the nature of the material permits it, the case method of dealing with the problem is followed. Concrete illustration takes the place of abstract disquisition.

The examples offered thus become immediately and at once instructive and inspiring. In place of the out-worn appeals to the will, the method of modern psychology is described by which entirely new sentiments may be developed toward work. Labor itself, instead of being regarded with aversion, is made the core of an inspiring sentiment or ideal, around which the human personality organizes itself into a permanent and satisfaction-giving whole.

The most diligent workers can, therefore, find something in the volume to glorify their diligence. Its author's hope is that parents, through it, will better understand their children, teachers their students, society its members, and weary men and women themselves. All, it is hoped, will learn better how to live.

A. HOLMES.

February, 1924.

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CONTROLLED POWER

A STUDY OF LAZINESS AND ACHIEVEMENT

CHAPTER I

Idleness and Indolence

SOME years ago a lecturer was engaged to speak at a mid-western city. He was met at a small railroad station some distance from the city by a wealthy friend who wished to drive him in from the country to the suburbs of the city where he was to be entertained. When the lecturer arrived at the station of the country town, the usual crowd, who had nothing better to do than to turn out for this chief event of the day in their eventless lives, hung about. Conspicuous amongst the vehicles was the automobile waiting for the visitor, into which he was ushered

by his host and the trip over the beautiful autumn country began.

The host was a vigorous Westerner who had risen from poverty to opulence by his energy and ambition, an achievement that he thought anybody might imitate who was willing to do it. Naturally he wanted to know the lecturer's opinion of the country, and when the latter casually referred to the shanty boats he had seen along the river and wondered how their occupants made a living, it was enough to start the man of enterprise off on a free-reined opinion about such riffraff.

"They're parasites," he said, "just a lot of lazy, good-for-nothing, no-accounts. They fish some, hunt some, and maybe raise a few vegetables around their shanties; and keep warm on driftwood. They don't pay taxes or rent, and never do a thing for the community. They do just as little as they can to keep alive, and no more.

"They're like the loafers around that station," he continued on an allied subject, "Some of them do some work now and then. But take Jim Baker, there, twenty years

old, living off his widowed mother who has a little property, and pretending to be waiting for a position in the city. That's what's the matter with this country,—the fellows are too lazy to take the opportunities lying around under their feet."

"That's a fine place," remarked the lecturer, to change the subject, as they were passing a beautiful country residence.

"Yes," heartily agreed his host, "that belongs to Mrs. X. Her husband was the biggest man around here. He died not long ago and left all he had to his widow. She has a son and daughter, fine young people. The girl is abroad now and the son is in the East somewhere. He studied law but of course he doesn't have to practice. Some people are lucky," he continued, with a touch of sadness. "I guess none of us would work if we didn't have to." He sighed, with a sidelong smile. "Still I do hate a lazy man."

The lecturer pondered over the conversation. Here were four types of men,—the man of vigor, the shanty-boat dweller, the station loafer, the elegant idler. One

worked all his waking hours; one, just enough to make a bare living; one, only when he felt like it; and the last, not at all. The riverman, who at least made his own living, was called a "parasite and good-for-nothing"; the young Baker, for "living off his mother, a widow", was roundly condemned; the elegantly indolent young man doing the same thing was fulsomely praised. It was confusing; confusing even to the man of work with his hard-earned philosophy of life, who hated "laziness" in general, but admitted that, after all, every man in his secret heart believed that ease was the rightful heritage of mankind and people worked only because they had to work.

The more one thinks about it the more he is convinced that the hard-headed man of business was reflecting the average opinion on the subject. The moral sense of mankind praises work. It *condemns* idleness in general, but *condones* it in particular. In the abstract, all men should work; in the concrete, few are expected to work unless forced by necessity. Still, the man who

voluntarily reduces his labor to the amount sufficient for obtaining the bare necessities of life is mercilessly condemned and made an outcast from good society. Out of such a tangle of practical precepts, how shall man find the principle which will guide him on the road to diligence?

Yet these obscurely felt distinctions are more or less soundly based upon social necessities and individual constitution. Man must work. That is obvious. Total and complete idleness on the part of all men would lead to a speedy dissolution of society. But also man must rest. That is equally obvious. But how much he shall labor and how much he shall rest is not so obvious; and who shall work and who shall rest is one of the most vexing problems of the world.

It is easy enough to condemn offhand all idleness as laziness. Obviously that is an unsound judgment. Infants, the aged and decrepit, cripples in body and mind by inheritance, the sick and sore in hospitals are all idle, and yet no one with a proper regard to humanity would for a moment

charge them with laziness. A more careful consideration and a little investigation would undoubtedly extend some of the same leniency to many of the idlers on our park benches, to loafers at railroad stations, to the tramps upon our highways, and even to the idle rich. All of them do not suffer from the taint of laziness. Idleness itself, therefore, though it is suspicious, should never be called indolence until its causes are searched out and known.

To find a lazy man, then, entails much more than the discovery of an idle man. This is merely the beginning of the trail. Next and immediately, the seeker possessed of that scientific spirit which is the only one efficacious for correcting the idleness must inquire into the causes of the inaction. This requires not only the closest scrutiny, but some analysis to make the necessary distinctions. For, patently, if the causes of idleness lie in the environment of the idle, then the charge of willful loafing cannot be made against him. Laziness is idleness induced by indolence, by a love of ease, by an unwillingness to labor.

A brief and condensed arrangement of the internal causes of idleness in tabular form will aid both the eye and the mind to grasp them most quickly.

CAUSES OF IDLENESS

I Physical

A. *Organic*	B. *Functional*
a. Diseases	a. Nervous affections
b. Wounds	b. Poisons
	c. Auto-intoxications

II Mental

A. *Natural*	B. *Unnatural*
a. Instinctive	a. Indolence in general
b. Temperamental	b. Habit
	c. Fatigue

Only when the causes of their inactivity are traced to internal conditions can laziness be even suspected of idlers. Such causes are either physical or mental.

The physical can be sub-classified as lesions, or actual destructions of tissue by germ diseases, or by wounds, or by any other means; or as functional disorders, due to some derangement which interferes with the smooth and efficient operation of the human machine though all its parts are intact and uninjured. Such cases may in-

clude nervous troubles of all kinds, poisons taken into the body or manufactured by the body itself, a process called auto-intoxication.

The other great group of causes summed up under the term mental may be subdivided into natural and unnatural, a division calculated to eliminate false moral implications in the study of idleness, and also calculated to suggest the kind of treatment required. There are many cases of inactivity, due, it is true, to indisposition, or dislike for action, which are yet altogether normal. Such idleness is usually periodical, and vanishes with proper rest, or under the usual conditions of human growth. The causes of such periodical attacks of indolence are many, but they can be summed up as instinctive, meaning by that: though they are irrational in a sense, they are still inborn and common to all people. Unnatural causes are overwork, worry, general indolence due to a peculiar divorcement of "will" and action, and finally the fixed and settled habit of the sluggard. The last may be the result of all the

other causes operating singly or in combination. It constitutes the example par excellence of true laziness—the sloth, sluggardness, indolence—despised by every being blessed with normal life and redblooded health.

With this understanding of the importance of studying the causes of idleness before we condemn it, we may turn our attention again to fathoming the reasons for the diverse judgments of public opinion as exemplified by the business man mentioned above. His hatred of laziness is well based, not only upon the social demands which require somebody to work productively so that all may not starve, but also, though unconsciously to him, upon the mental and physical constitution of man. Contrary to the socially bred ideals of elegant leisure as the natural and rightful state of man, the general—though confused and uncertain—opinion that some kind of activity is obligatory to all human beings is well grounded. That truth, deduced from the experience of thinking and unthinking members of the race, is based upon the inner-

most nature of man. For, in spite of his powers of reason, his unique possession of ideas, his aspirations of religion, his fine appreciations of beauty, *man is built primarily for action.* All else is secondary to that. His physical being demonstrates it. The atrophy of his unused muscles, the deterioration of his non-functioning organs, the general lapse of health throughout his whole system demonstrate indisputably that proper action is the best prevention and surest cure of the ills to which flesh has fallen an unwilling heir.

But it is in the constitution of man's mind, the very organ called upon to support an opposite conclusion, that the primacy of action is triumphantly vindicated. The operation of the normal mind of man shows conclusively that its functions are designed to initiate and direct the movements of the body. Not one of its products is for the mind alone. It is not a treasury that may lay up in store a wealth of knowledge or fine feeling, close-hoarded for its own miserly enjoyment. Action is the end of thinking. Science, the organized and stored knowledge

of man's reflection, is but an attempt to describe the universe in terms of motion. Evolution depicts the whole world as a developing organism, moving toward a goal. Psychology, the study dealing with sentient creatures only, is defined as the science of behavior and lays down as its fundamental principle, the aphorism: *Every impression tends to expression.* Culture itself is the habit of making fine discriminations in expression as well as impression.

Illustrations of this fundamental law in man's nature are common. The mouth of a hungry tramp waters when he smells the aroma of a juicy beefsteak. The sour taste of vinegar causes an involuntary wrinkling of the face; certain odors bring on the retching of nausea; a sudden, loud sound will make a roomful of people "jump out of their skins"; intense pain will cause involuntary tightening of muscles, or even agonizing writhing and spasms of convulsions. The sights and sounds of babyhood express themselves in the infant's aimless and purposeless jumpings and wrigglings, which time alone reduces to purposeful

coördination and useful habit. All impressions thus have their natural and normal outlet in activity of some kind.

Ideas have the same power. They do more than merely initiate action; they control and direct action. Action congruent with an idea is rational action. It is human reason at work. Eating, as Professor James points out, because of hunger, gives no thought to the purpose of food, and is therefore largely, or wholly, instinctive. But when a man deliberately swallows a dose of medicine, he does it rationally with a clear idea in his mind of what the action is intended for and what the results will be. Such action is peculiarly human and differentiates man from the beasts.

But suppose that ideas do not result in action. Suppose that some subtle divorcement exists between the idea in mind and the resultant muscular contractions which would send that idea out into the material world through a whole chain of primary and secondary agents. That would mean that man had abdicated his throne, divested himself of his high prerogatives,

abjured the very nature within him, and had abandoned himself, like the mad Nebuchadnezzar, to companionship with the wild things of the fields. No wonder that such vivisection of thought from action is considered either a terrible malady or the basest kind of moral delinquency to be visited with the severest abjurations.

This torturing hiatus between "will" and action, between duty and fulfillment which many suffer in a greater or less degree, is set forth with most acute analytic power by De Quincey in his "Confessions of an English Opium Eater." "In thus describing and illustrating" his "intellectual torpor," he touches upon something the opium-eater finds "most oppressive and tormenting, from the sense of incapacity and feebleness, from direct embarrassments incident to the neglect or procrastination of each day's appropriate labors, and the remorse which must often exasperate the stings of these evils to a conscientious mind"—pains that visit also the lazy man. Then he continues his vivid description of the moral sufferings of a man who can see

what ought to be done and has no power to do it. "The opium-eater loses none of his moral sensibilities or aspirations; he wishes and longs as earnestly as ever to realize what he believes possible and feels to be exacted by duty; but his intellectual apprehension of what is possible infinitely outruns his power, not of execution only, but even of proposing or willing. He lies under the world's weight of incubus and nightmare; he lies in sight of all that he would fain perform, just as a man forcibly confined to his bed by mortal languor of paralysis who is compelled to witness injury or outrage offered to some object of his tenderest love; he would lay down his life if he might rise and walk; but he is powerless as an infant, and cannot so much as make an effort to move." In these vivid words we have a description of a malady, aggravated in this case by opium, it is true, but nevertheless approaching in some respects the sufferings of laziness.

An analysis like the above reveals the essential justness of man's universally stern sense of reproach against inaction. It is

against nature; it attacks the very citadel of man's personality. It denies and defies his essence. It neutralizes both his physical and mental powers and negates all his pretensions to superiority over the lower animals and places him upon a level with the inert masses of sticks and stones about him. Whether it be definite and specific as in paralysis, or inherited and general as in idiocy, or slowly and suicidally formulated as in laziness, the divorcement between a man's conscious life and the expression of it in congruent action is a deep-seated and terrible malady.

Having seen the foundation for man's condemnation for the *quality* of inactivity, we are ready next to examine into the reason for his divergent opinions regarding the *quantity* of activity which is right and proper. Obviously, the necessity for rest stands out above all other reasons for admitting that a man cannot work all the time. He must rest some of the time. But where to draw the line between work and recuperation is the problem. Some men, as the shanty-boat dwellers of our illustration

above, do work somewhat, and yet they are condemned as lazy. How much must a man work in order to escape that judgment? The answer is to be found in both the constitution of society as a whole and in man's answering mental constitution.

The decision rests, first, upon the apportionment of the amount of labor necessary to be performed for the maintenance of every nation. In the United States of America, for example, about forty million of productive workers support about one hundred and five millions of people, providing them directly or indirectly with all their necessities and their luxuries. That means that, on an average, each worker must support two and one-half people. In the economic boat he must pull two and one half times his own weight. Anything less manifests a degree of idleness open to censure or an inquiry into its causes. Herein lies the social principle which determines the minimum amount of work a man must perform in order to escape the charge of lazy parasitism.

All society rests upon this principle. In

every group of animals and in every tribe of men wherein there are helpless members indispensable to the eventual perpetuation of that society, the compulsion rests upon each able-bodied member to do more than keep himself alive. He must do some work for others. How much he must do depends upon the plane of living for the whole group. This is a duty that comes inevitably with any organization of human beings. No specialized intricate division of labor can thwart the necessity. Any one living in such an association and partaking of its benefits, and yet who does less, or only enough, to furnish himself with the minimum essentials for living on a primitive plane is guilty of a blamable idleness.

Besides this there is also a principle deducible from man's own nature. He is more than an animal. He is moved by incentives above mere instincts. Besides the brute impulses to the satisfaction of primitive bodily wants which preserve his own life and reproduce his kind, man possesses and in turn is possessed by high ideals of service. He is a moral being. He has

duties to perform which cannot be traced directly to his animal instincts. He will work for his own, and for more than his own. He will preserve his life by blind struggle like any other animal; but he will also lay down that life obedient to a divine call to service for his country or his fellows. This is his nature, and this is what distinguishes his actions from brute actions, and builds between him and them an impassable gulf.

When, therefore, a man is deaf to higher calls, performs only the vegetative functions of mere self-subsistence and the production of his kind, and no overt cause prevents him from doing more, he is charged with abject laziness. To live like a tree, or even to live like a lower animal, merely exercising his powers of locomotion to move from place to place in search of food and the satisfaction of the most primitive instincts, lowers man to a plane below the high calling patently intended for him by nature when she endowed him with powers of thought and purposes of service infinitely above the low level of self-satisfaction.

This charge of laziness, therefore, in its inner significance, points an accusing finger at the very essence of man's humanness. For, otherwise, as the poet pertinently asks:

> What is a man,
> If his chief good, and market of his time,
> Be but to sleep and feed? A beast; no more.
> Sure, He, that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason
> To rust in us unused.

The confused judgments of society about idleness we have thus reduced to two fundamental forces in man: one, the passion for labor; the other, the longing for ease. From these two fundamental desires have come all the achievements of civilization. Without the passion for labor man would perish with starvation or rot in idleness. Without the longing for ease he would plod along like a dumb beast of burden under the depressing loads laid upon him by the hand of indifferent nature. The legitimate longing for ease can be satisfied only by labor which reveals by invention and discovery new and

constantly easier modes of wresting a livelihood from the hard fist of nature. Where eternal summer has allied itself with man's native disposition to lotus-eating languor, there civilization has made its smallest advances. But in those zones where stern winter and fertile summer have timed their balanced changes to man's rhythmic disposition to work and rest, there the earth has blossomed with the blessings and adornments of the highest cultures.

While the moral obliquy visited in the past upon idleness in general has been fairly justified by the nature of the case, society's treatment of those called lazy has been mischievous and futile. Conventional morality recognizes usually but one cure. Its method is one of short shrift. When obvious causes fail to account for idleness the conviction of laziness is quick and certain. Upon that follows even more quickly and surely the only treatment morality knows. That is the simple expedient of punishment. But when laziness is studied more thoroughly it is found that it affects the whole man. It is not only an inactivity of the

physical being, but of the mental as well. The "will" is affected along with the rest. It is paralyzed or partially paralyzed; and therefore fails to respond to those measures required by sinning. Punishment fails to cure laziness because laziness is a disease of the will.

The demonstration of the injustice of punitive treatment appears in the fact that the hardest workers have always suffered the most severe punishments, while the laziest of the lazy have always escaped. Slaves, who have longest carried the world's toil upon their backs, have also borne their heaviest brunt of the world's inhuman treatment for laziness. Women, the working-class woman—not the elegant indolent of the privileged idlers—have likewise received their unmerited share of such suffering. But for children, and again children of the worker, there have always been reserved the most constant and unceasing torments for so-called "laziness", though to add to the confusion of moral counsels children are and always have been the most active members of the human race.

Probably no one movement illustrates better the essential falseness of affirming moral obliquity as the chief—or only—cause of idleness, or points more clearly to the sound and scientific method of treating it, than the world-wide campaign of investigation, diagnosis and treatment of the hookworm disease. Like laziness, no one knows surely how old the disease is. Possibly it was known in Egypt in 1550 B. C. Europe was familar with it in 1780, though the hookworm itself was described by Dubini, an Italian, in 1838. Since 1910 it has become a world-problem and to-day is treated in an enormous literature learned and popular, and its cause, the hookworm, is known in newspapers as the "lazy germ."

In America it was first noticed in connection with dirt-eating by slaves. A Frenchman, Chabert, writing in 1821, with the usual fatality of human nature to delay scientific discoveries by assigning moral causes to unnatural conditions, attributes the slaves' desire to eat dirt to their laziness. "For most negroes," he says, "doing nothing is the supreme bliss. Some of them

carry the love of idleness to such a point that they employ, in order to escape work, every means suggested by sloth, notwithstanding the certainty of injury to health." James B. Duncan, writing in 1849 on the same subject, mentions the popular disposition to attribute the languor and weakness following dirt-eating to "laziness and malingering."

It did not occur to those concerned to attribute the idleness to some deeper cause and call the state illness. Consequently, the so-called laziness was attacked by the usual punitive method. Tin masks, iron gags, and chainings to the floor are mentioned as special modes of treatment calculated to relieve the situation and cure the patient whose love of shirking moved him to eat dirt which in turn unfitted him for hard and efficient labor.

Fortunately the scientific spirit recently invaded this stronghold of human suffering. Medical men, a few devoted pioneers at first, and then many of them later, bent themselves to the task of finding the cause of that idleness which was accompanied

with languor, dizziness, headaches, paleness, and a violent opposition to work in any form. The cause was discovered in the hookworm, a parasite living in the intestines of the victim and sucking his blood. A great campaign of individual medication and social prevention was inaugurated; and to-day, as a result of its beneficent and enlightened methods, in spite of some early opposition, millions who would have gone to their graves burdened with the odium of laziness are living healthy, robust and vigorous lives, cured and happy.

That, in brief, is the kernel of the story.[1] It is given here not alone for its worth in showing what actually has been done to eliminate one kind of so-called laziness, but also for its larger service as furnishing a norm of the diagnosis and treatment of all idleness. Only when the whole problem of indolence is approached in such a spirit and solved in such a fashion will idleness be reduced to a minimum.

[1] For a brief but systematic account of the matter see "Hookworm Disease," by George Dock, M. D.; and C. C. Bass, M. D., 1910; and "Bibliography of Hookworm Disease," Rockefeller Foundation, 1922.

Laziness, then, to sum up the chapter, is a word that covers a multitude of sins chiefly of omission rather than commission. For the essential characteristic about laziness is its idleness, its do-nothingness, its non-accomplishment. It never gets things done; it puts off for to-morrow what it should do to-day; it procrastinates, lets time slip by, offers excuses instead of accomplishments; oozes along through life in apologetic and evasive way with neither the energy to rebel nor the disposition to offend; on the one hand evading work from a flabbiness of moral fiber, and on the other escaping worry by the lack of foresight.

It is a malady that attacks the whole man. It paralyzes the nerves and muscles of his body, atrophies his intellect and softens his will. It invades the very citadel of his personality and disperses into a conflicting mob that unity of factors embraced in the three great marks of a person —thought, emotion and will—and leaves the man scattered, uncertain, inefficient. So deep-seated is the malady that it attacks and destroys that connection between

thought and congruent action which makes man a reasonable creature, which has built all his civilization, founded all his institutions, made all of his inventions, and adorned these necessities with the beauties of art and morals.

Of course, no perfect case of complete laziness is ever discovered. Every person does at least some few duties, performs perforce some few actions. Those who reduce their activities to the low satisfaction of supplying only the minimum of animal wants, illustrate that form of laziness so heartily condemned when it appears in the tramps and loafers and parasites of society. Viewed in these ways, that idleness which finds its causes within the man himself, lodged in the deep recesses of his being, is a malady which requires the most patient analysis for its diagnosis and the most scientific application of modern physical and mental therapeutics for its treatment.

Chapter II

That Tired Feeling

STRANGE indeed would it seem for any one to mistake overwork for laziness. Yet that is not only possible but occurs frequently amongst American men. One has only to become acquainted with the hardest workers in our country to find that many of them are condemning themselves for laziness and endeavoring in many ways, sometimes dangerous ways, to spur themselves on to more and more jaded efforts. In fact, so true is it that the man who has never worked very hard or very long can generally be known by his boasts or complaints about the life of hard work he has spent. The really hard-working man seldom complains about hard work. He sighs about the limitations to his strength, calculates how much a man loses out of life by being com-

pelled to sleep so many hours a day, and mourns over the lost minutes of his years. Doctor Johnson, Wordsworth, Watt, the inventor, and Webster, the orator, all condemned themselves as indolent.

Another evidence of this contradictory state of affairs is offered by the fact that the man who breaks down from overwork is himself surprised by the catastrophe. It falls upon him unawares. If men knew they were overworking they would rest. But the more they go beyond the limits of their endurance and the less time they allow for recuperation by rest and sleep, the more mercilessly they are often driven on by the conscious-stricken thought that they are lazy.

How shall a man know when he is tired? By the feeling, of course, smiles everybody. And the answer is correct for the first stages of tiredness. But everybody knows from hearsay and some know from experience the famous "second wind." That is a state of relief from the first agonies of weariness coming on if the exercise is continued. A runner knows he is tired by the pounding

of the blood in his head and heart, by the gasps of his lungs for air, by the red-hot pains shooting through his muscles. But he keeps up; he "punishes himself" without mercy, and gradually or suddenly the first excruciating symptoms of weariness die down and disappear. He has obtained his "second wind." After that he can run till he drops from total exhaustion.

In some quarters such an experience has been extolled. The experience of the race track with young men, and men splendidly trained for the occasion, is supposed to apply to men in middle life or beyond, engaged in other work entirely different from racing, and not under the care of expert trainers who watch their every mouthful of food and every moment of application and recreation.

Such experiences are dangerous anywhere. One close look at the terrible pallor of some runners at the end of a long distance event, one glance at the end of a boat race with men falling forward upon their oars, will convince even the ordinary observer that the gains secured through the second wind

may be purchased at too great a price. Even while I write a great aquatic hero is laid up for a year's total rest under the most careful observation and treatment, enforced by his overwork in his favorite sport. Every athletic trainer knows the baleful effects of "over-training" and the deadened state of "staleness" which results from too constant and too long application to a régime of training lacking in the essentials of that exhilaration which must be retained by the athlete at all costs.

Young men, taking their cue from our popular athletics and listening with an all too literal ear to its figures of speech like "battle", "win or die spirit," "go till you drop," and other spurt-inspiring slogans of the track and field, undertake to carry the practices they suggest over into a forty-year campaign lasting about eight hours a day in the struggle for prosaic things like daily bread. Such men are often earnest, enthusiastic, zealous to the point of sacrificing self and family, and when the first symptoms of staleness come, are the ones also who spur themselves on and

on by charges of laziness, yellowness, weakness.

To such men a study of fatigue would be illuminating. They ought to learn how to tell when they are *tired*, not *tired out*, but just tired, for that is the time to stop work. No man, woman or child should work beyond the point where he is tired. All the pains that come from work carried to that point are beneficent visitors of Nature in disguise, warning like the green signals on the railroad track, of the crimson lighted danger ahead. They shout, "Slow down! Be prepared to stop!" They are the outcries of the nerves and the muscles driven to protest. They announce the first stage in the process of fatigue,—mere weariness.

The next stage is the "second wind" mentioned above. The pains of weariness disappear; attention now focuses itself upon the task in hand; new sources of energy seem to be tapped and an eagerness to work amounting almost to fascination arises. If careful observers now make exact tests of the product of such a worker, it is discovered

that the quality of the product has greatly depreciated. Without apparent excuse for them, blunders mar the performance and lead often to great losses or to long and wearisome re-doing of work. The worker himself is unconscious of all this and goes ahead with wonderfully sustained interest and a full head of steam.

If, however, the watchers turn their attention away from the product to the operator himself, they see a change in him. His movements are no longer regular and mechanically efficient, and directed with that calm certainty which marked his first efforts. They are jerky, uncertain, hurried, feverish, betokening a state of mind that trusts to the luck of long habit, rather than to the deliberate direction of each movement of the operation.

Not only the hands of the worker but also his face betray the onset of fatigue. His lips are usually pale, his nostrils distended, his cheeks flushed in spots of red, or mottled with blotches of white and pink, his eyes are brilliant, alternating with a certain dull weariness at moments of relax-

ation from the duty in hand; his breathing quick and sometimes labored. All these symptoms mark the passage from weariness over into that of fatigue, a state not only faulty for efficient production, but one that lays up in store many a weary day or year of reduced production or complete rest for the sufferer.

What is happening in such a case of fatigue [1] in the secret parts of the cellular chambers of the body? The answer is simple: The poisoning of the whole body! Auto-intoxication it is called, which means literally "self-poisoning." Every organ of the body—indeed every cell of the body—whenever it is brought into activity wastes away like a material thing used,—clothes, shoes, the edge of a knife, a grindstone. The waste particles are thrown into the blood stream and are then carried along to internal secretory organs of the body—the liver, for example—that strain out these waste and poisonous materials, which are

[1] Much information on this subject of fatigue was gathered by the British Minister of Munitions, and published in reports in 1916, 1917. A classic work is that of A. Mosso, "Fatigue," translated by M. and W. B. Drummond, 1906.

then cast out of the body through the usual channels.

Now, if for any reason whatever the excretory organs do not perform their function of filtering out of the blood these poisons, they remain in the blood and accumulate there. As the same blood stream also carries digested food to the various cells of the body that they may renew their structures after they have broken down through use, it bathes the microscopic parts of the body not only in nourishing substances, but also in these poisons.

The nerves are the first to feel the effect. They begin by sending in their messages of fright and pain. The person says he is "tired." But if he does not rest, if he does not change from one occupation to another, in short, if he does not eliminate the waste tissue fast enough, the nerves are held in their bath of poison and soon lose their power to send out further warnings to the overworking man. A sense of relief follows. It is the relief of dying. Intoxication has arrived. The self-poisoning process has begun and advanced to some

degree. The green signal has been passed, the pace has not been slackened and around the curve looms up through the darkness the red light beyond which waits disaster.

All of this time the sufferer may be a conscientious man bitterly assailing himself with laziness. Or worse, more tragic if possible, it may be a growing boy or girl, forced on beyond his wish or will to labor like an animal or a machine, till the poisons accumulating within him will mar his life forever. How solicitous are many parents about their small children's overplaying and how indifferent some years later are the same parents to their boys' and girls' overwork! There still seems to linger the superstition that play is inherently dangerous while work cannot hurt anybody. Both are erroneous opinions. Certain kinds of play may be overdone and work does hurt people sometimes. Doctor Woods Hutchinson says that play leaves off and work begins just at the point where the toxins are not strained out of the blood and begin to poison the system. Therefore he counts work a poison and warns Americans against

the deadly habit of industry! While he must not in this be taken too literally, his words are full of suggestive warning against that overwork common in our land and sometimes mistaken for laziness.

That the state is not due to total exhaustion of muscles and nerves but to the formation of some kind of poison within their structure is confirmed by experiment. The nerves themselves may be so far exhausted as to refuse to excite the muscles and then the muscles themselves may be excited to further contraction by electricity. By such artificial means a state so near total exhaustion may be brought about that the deepest fatigue and even death ensues.

A dog has been taken out into the fields and compelled to hunt all day. Then at night his blood has been transfused into the veins of a dog which had rested all day, whereupon the rested dog begins to show all the symptoms of weariness, proving that something generated in the blood of the working dog caused his fatigue. A Berlin doctor, many years ago, thoroughly exhausted guinea pigs, first by compelling

them to the most vigorous muscular efforts and then by stimulating their muscles with electricity until utter exhaustion came on. They were then killed, the toxin separated out from their blood, dried and injected into the veins of rested animals. Immediately the symptoms of extreme fatigue appeared in the inoculated animals, and sometimes death followed.

A step further in this experiment is recorded in the *Scientific American* for April, 1905, in an article entitled, "Anti-toxin for Laziness." By the usual methods, an anti-toxin, or a substance which would oppose the action of the fatigue-poison, was filtered out from the blood of a horse. This anti-toxin was injected into the veins of animals and they showed a wonderfully increased power to do work without the usual signs of weariness. A young lady who was inoculated was able to lift with the middle finger of her right hand two kilograms 2,478 times as against lifting the same weight 1,583 times without the anti-toxin. She suffered no ill after effects from the dose, but felt increased vigor and energy.

The use of the anti-toxin has not become widely distributed, but the belief that fatigue is a distinct poisoning due to waste products thrown off into the blood circulation and not carried out by the proper excretory organs is widely accepted as a well-proved theory.

The treatment for fatigue is of two kinds; the prevention of the state and the restoration of the over-strained body to its normal condition. The prevention of overwork requires a serious measurement by every worker of his capacity to work. Such power varies enormously with individuals. In general men can be divided into the following classes according to their working and resting abilities:

1. Those who weary quickly and rest slowly.
2. Those who weary slowly and rest slowly.
3. Those who weary quickly and rest quickly.
4. Those who weary slowly and rest quickly.

These last have always been the admi-

ration and the discouragement of ordinary men equipped with only the usual quantity of energy. The leaders of the world have often, besides their mere genius for performing great feats with ease and expedition, also possessed a remarkable power for laboring long and diligently. Cæsar, according to Yohann Christian Wolff, the German philosopher, could dictate to four amanuenses at once and at the same time compose a letter with his own hand. Having at last conquered the tribal enemies of Rome and made himself the master of the world, his restless activity urged him on to larger tasks like draining the Pontine marshes and bettering the conditions of his whole empire. Napoleon was a tireless worker. He dictated letters till midnight and often began again at three o'clock in the morning. During the codification of the laws of France in his famous "Codes", Napoleon worked with the ablest jurists of his empire, continued far into the night and often found himself still going on at three o'clock in the morning when the rest were hopelessly asleep with their heads upon

the table. Conquered at last and sent to a bleak and solitary island, his first thought upon his arrival was a comprehensive and active campaign for the improvement of his prison with a water-system and other works.

Socrates could stand still plunged in thought through a whole night. Mr. Thomas Edison thinks nothing of working days at a time with but snatches of slumber and little food. Von Humboldt, the last man to encompass in one intellect all the learning of modern science, complained in his older years that he could not accomplish much because he found it necessary to undress and go to bed for five hours, whereas in his youth he could throw himself fully dressed upon a lounge in his office and secure in a few hours all the sleep he required for his prodigious labors. A visitor having some semiofficial errand with one of our great captains of industry once found him at noon in his private barber shop being shaved, at the same time having his shoes blacked, dictating to his stenographer, and eating his lunch, consisting of a sand-

wich. He apologized for making the appointment with his visitor at that hour by saying it was the only leisure moment he had during the day!

Such exhilarating examples as these show conclusively that some favorites of the gods have caught the spirit of work and find in it a greater satisfaction than in anything else they can do. Such men do not wear out; they thrive and grow lusty upon a régime of enthusiastic expenditure of energy; they live long, continue active to the last, keep their faculties, conduct great enterprises, and finally close their eyes with a smile of gratification upon the activities still going on around them, which their genius and their energy have set in motion.

To avoid the dangers of fatigue and a consequent "break-down", men must resolutely and impartially examine themselves with regard to their working and resting periods and order their lives accordingly. Many an ordinary man with good working ability has arbitrarily seized upon some hero for an example, and then fallaciously

supported by some moral theory regarding work, has driven himself mercilessly beyond his ability and ended a total wreck. A student in college, following his elder brother, a man of marvelous mental ability, who had made a great reputation for himself by taking the course in a short time and yet leading his class in grades, determined to do as well as his brother. He assumed that it was merely a matter of ambition and will. He believed that all men, because they have certain stores of latent energy, possess unlimited amounts of energy. He therefore supported himself by tending to furnaces and waiting on tables, and undertook to cut the time of his college course in two by carrying extra studies constantly. When remonstrated with for his ambition he answered that he would rather die in an extraordinary effort than live by mediocre effort. He died. His death is evidence that each man has a limited amount of energy, that ambition does not measure the amount he has, and that "will" power may be so disproportionately great that it can sap the vital powers of a man and leave him help-

less to resist the forces always threatening his life.

If this is true for grown people it is doubly true for growing children. Their energy is very limited and quickly exhausted. Usually they do recuperate rapidly, so rapidly that oftentimes inexpert teachers and parents are skeptical about a child's weariness when he sees him so quickly immersed in violent play after being released from some task at which he seemed to be entirely exhausted. It is true that the child was wearied, worn out, unable to proceed. This is particularly the case as regards mental labor.

The child mind soon reaches a state of exhaustion where it refuses to take in more. Study then becomes not only a futile waste of time, but a positively dangerous and poisonous destruction of mind and body. Prodigiously bright children are in special danger of such overstimulation and consequent lifelong dullness. Brief periods of study and frequent periods of rest in change from work to play is the proper arrangement for all children, the younger

they are the briefer the periods of work should be.

Also, as fatigue toxins are carried by the blood to every part of the body, and as every activity of every organ of the body produces such waste products, it is a particularly pernicious theory which insists that since a child has been doing nothing all day but study, he therefore can be set to performing some heavy and hard manual labor upon his release from school. The theory that only those organs in immediate use are wearied is almost as pernicious as the theory that each person, old and young, male and female, while differing perhaps in muscular strength or mental alertness, still has in his body the same amount of energy; and can consequently, by quicker or slower methods of work, produce the same amount before he is utterly worn out. All people vary in their amounts of energy, and children vary from grown people as well as amongst themselves. The humane adult will no more drive a child beyond his endurance than he would drive a pack animal beyond its endurance.

When once fatigue has seized upon a man and announces its presence by a complete collapse, or by the symptoms described above showing themselves in partial interference with efficient production, the condition should be treated as a disease. It is a case of poisoning, how serious depends upon concomitant circumstances. A regular medical practitioner should be consulted and trusted, and his advice followed with meticulous care. It is one of the symptoms of fatigue that irritation, impatience and mistrust of doctors and remedies add their mental and emotional disturbances to the physical helplessness of the malady. Besides the physical remedies and treatments which are designed to rid the system of its self-generated poisons, the mind of the patient should be quieted by a clear understanding of his trouble. An adequate understanding of the theory of fatigue will greatly aid his recovery by bringing in the mental aids available. Any impatience at the interruption of his overvalued work will invariably retard the longed-for recovery. Worry about the affairs left to others, or

about the maintenance of the family, simply adds its quota of poison to the amount already clogging the system of the sufferer. Rebellion against life, against the universe, against God, is not only pitiably futile but bitterly reactive upon the harborer of such childish notions.

The mental treatment requires a thorough overhauling of one's life philosophy. It is as much a moral exercise as a mental one. It begins with a purging of egotism which assumed the possession of powers which were not there. After such a downfall in working ability it is a kind of hallucination, or the erection of a Freudian inferiority complex, to go on insisting that nothing but "will" is necessary to accomplish everything. A humility based upon a proper measurement of one's real ability should follow upon the humiliating breakdown of theory and practice of a false doctrine of work.

With such humility should come the proper estimation of man's place in this universe. Like Margaret Fuller, the New England transcendentalist, a man suffering

from overwork must sincerely say "I accept the Universe." For, he has learned by bitter experience the aptness of reply made by that pitifully self-driven philosopher Carlyle, "Gad, she'd better." Resignation to this world, to its laws, to man's own patent and cramping limitations, is the first step toward the right adjustment of a person to the order of the things over which he has no control except that which comes from aligning himself with them. A swimmer may never reach the shore who perversely battles with the current, when he might conquer the current and come to shore victoriously if he would only recognize his antagonist and let it carry him part way. "The meek shall inherit the earth," has an immense therapeutical value in cases of weary atoms of humanity broken by overwrought ambition.

With resignation comes the first peace of mind which spells conquest of fatigue and promises the greater conquest of self. For the weary one need not resign himself to a life of total uselessness. Like one of the greatest baseball pitchers of this country

who suffered three heart-rending breakdowns in his career and came back each time, the fatigue patient need only change his style. He must attack the world of work in a new way, with a new method. He must quit driving, remembering that many a driver of men and things creates useless but fatal opposition for himself in stirring up rebellion in the persons whom he uses as means to his ends. Lincoln was a great man; his powers were wonderful, his mind penetrating, his insight into men and events commensurate with the stupendous play of forces with which he had to cope, his will undaunted, his conscience serene, his hope unfaltering. But, had he not possessed that unfathomable patience with people which marked all his words and acts, it is a question if even his giant powers could have overcome the gigantic powers massed against him. To those forces he never added a hair's weight by impatience.

There is a quiet power in this world, and a power in quiet things, in quiet men, in quiet minds. The by-product of the roaring Niagara is the gently moving water in

the sluiceways flowing to the great turbines, and in that silent and invisible current that flits along the wires to its appointed service. "Peace hath her victories, no less renowned than war" is a message for those who sing to their own disaster:

> Life is one continuous battle,
> Never ended, never done.

Far truer is it to say:

> But dream not helm and harness,
> The sign of valor true,
> Peace hath higher tests of manhood,
> Than battle ever knew.

How to work and be at peace is the final achievement of the mental treatment of fatigue.

Many men and women have found the secret of the peace, not of passivity, but of progress. In the sure and patient sense of ongoing, of moving toward a clear goal, of developing in the direction of an ideal in spite of all untoward outward circumstances, great accomplishers of the world's work have found their never-failing spring

of inspiration. "To me peace means charging through the Argonne forest after we have been lying in the trenches for three weeks," wrote an American soldier during the last war. He had learned on the mud-sodden fields of France the secret of a victorious life. Others find it in other ways and in other places, for it is an open and free secret. Many discover it at the heart of religion. St. Catherine of Sienna found it there, and learned "how to make herself a solitude in her heart, where amid all her occupations she could be alone with God." The Stoics produced heroes of the same mold. Seneca writes of Marcus Cato, at the fall of Syracuse, "Amid the flash of swords on all sides, and the riot of the plundering soldiery, amid flames and blood and ruin of the fallen city, amid the crash of temples falling upon their own gods, one man was at peace," and that man had been one of the most active leaders in the defense of his city and his home. Just as a pebble thrown into a placid pool will make ripples relatively larger than a stone thrown into stormy waves, so a comparatively

weak incentive to action will move a quiet-souled man when it requires powerful stimulation of his nervous system to move a perturbed and worried man to the same systematic labor. It saves wear and tear on all the organs of the body to be quiet.

Chapter III

Misfits

AMONGST any group of employers in America a listener can always hear one constant note in their complaints. That is the invariable observation that employees have little or no interest in their work. The universality of this fault indicates how much loss in productive energy the world suffers from the lagging consequent upon such a lack. In this respect manual laborers are not alone.

Three men intimately acquainted with the conditions recently estimated the percentage of successful business men in their city who were so dissatisfied with their vocation that they would quit it if they could. The three agreed that ninety-five per cent would quit what they were then doing and go into something else if they could.

The seriousness of such a condition may be judged by the statement of a large employer asserting that all so-called industrial laziness is due to this one cause alone. "The manager who complains of having lazy or inefficient clerks," he is quoted as saying, "really shows his own shortcomings. If a healthy person seems to be lazy, it is because he has not found his niche, or is doing work he does not find interesting. And there is no kind of work that cannot be made interesting to those adapted to it." This unequivocal statement may be too broad, but the fact that it is made by a man widely experienced in the management of men gives it a weight worthy of being considered.

Misfits are common everywhere. Equally common the assertion that the lack of interest displayed by a misfit in his job is due to laziness. The suffering of such a soul, misplaced and then misjudged, is set forth with keen analytic ability and fine artistic skill by Booth Tarkington, in his novel of the Middle West called "Turmoil." Bibbs Sheridan, the hero, is the son of

a practical-minded manufacturer and the brother of a couple of young, ambitious and energetic disciples of their father. The father determines that Bibbs, too, shall grow up with the business, though the boy hates it with all the fervor of a poet's soul. In spite of his agonizing rebellion he is put to work at a machine in a roaring shop, where his sufferings and his inefficiences can be imagined. His father, of course, attributes his abhorrence of the place to laziness and remarks to his wife, "Bibbs hates work so much that it makes him sick." His older brother acquiesces in this diagnosis. "He'd rather just sit in the house," he says of Bibbs, "and mope around by himself. Nobody could ever get him to do anything; you can't get him to do anything now. He never has any life in him; and honestly, if he is my brother, I must say that I believe Bibbs Sheridan is the laziest man God ever made."

Whenever a condition like the one described becomes interesting enough to claim a place in popular fiction, one may be sure that it is widespread and the description of

it true to life. On the subject of misfits, their woeful inefficiency, and the frequency of the assignment of laziness as the cause of their uselessness in the world of work there can be no dispute.

Misfits are due actually to two classes of causes. They lie in the environment of the worker or in the worker himself. From one point of view, the job does not fit; from another point of view, he does not fit the job. The outcome is the same for the output, but very different for the cure. The first statement emphasizes the necessity for preventive measures. The right man must choose the right job. The second statement suggests the possibility of fitting the man to the job. Probably both hints should be followed to some degree. The first one is receiving now the most attention through the fabrication and application of character-analysis systems and that attention is undeniably needed.

The very multitude of character-analysis systems makes it impossible to go into that subject here. Still the modern method of treating misfits is so different from the old

one of bewailing their slothfulness that a few hints of the principles involved in a simple self-analysis might be of service. Let it be said immediately that no system of character-analysis for vocational guidance purposes has been accepted by all, or even a large majority, of practitioners. Neither has one received the unqualified support of scientific investigators. But, in spite of these two facts, there remain clear and cogent common-sense principles which can be applied with profit to the selection of a vocation. By common-sense principles is meant first, the discernment of those obvious qualifications required in each trade and profession; and secondly, the equally clear determination of the candidate's lack or possession of the fundamental qualities required by his desired vocation. Such a common-sense analysis is conspicuous for its absence from the choices usually made of a life's work.

The choice of a field of work or a vocation is usually made upon atrociously insufficient grounds. Students going off to college often decide to become engineers, chemists,

agriculturists by talking accidentally with other students on the train. A young man who is a teacher to-day said that he entered the registrar's office when he first went to college with no thought of what course he would take. He heard the boy immediately in front of him in line say "Electrical engineering." When the registrar asked him what course he wanted to take he answered, "Engineering!" though he had not the slightest notion of what was involved. After three years' application to that line of study he fortunately discovered his unfitness, changed his course and is to-day successful and happy in his teaching profession.

Many statistics could be adduced to show how blindly young people drift into occupations for which they are entirely unfitted. Thenceforth they drone languidly on through life without the encouragement of marked success, enduring the charge of laziness because there appears to be no overt cause in external circumstances to account for the lack of diligence and slow advance.

Such typical errors can be avoided by applying at least the negative tests of fitness for any particular vocation. Certain occupations are immediately eliminated from practical consideration by the locality in which the candidate lives; some by his physical condition; others by his inherited traits; a few by his social position; still fewer by his moral standards; and a very few by his religious convictions. A host of possibilities still remain. These he can divide into *trades* and *professions*, and on the instant, certain considerations determine his choice of one or the other. Of the choices left there is just one final determinant; *that is the candidate's own desire.* Let that be final.

He should never be swayed by the will of some one else, nor by some end to be gained, like money, or fame, or power. Eventually, the arbiter of his success in his chosen life's work will be the self-respect he can feel deep down in his own heart for the worthiness of the work to which he is devoting his being. If at first he chooses what he desires, he will be interested in it;

and that initial interest will carry him far along into his chosen field, far enough for him to establish enthusiastic and faithful habits of application which will act automatically, if his desire ever does die down. If, in the beginning, he aimed at satisfaction in duties well done and not at some more tempting but superficial or selfish objective, he will never find bitter disappointment lurking at the core of his heart and spreading its paralyzing venom over his whole system.

Now let us turn to the other side of the misfit problem. Let us say that a man has made a most unhappy choice, that his work has palled upon him, that hope of advancement is dead in his heart and that, no matter what his occupation, he has sunk down to the numb routine of a sore-footed hack-horse limping over the cobblestones of a daily course. Edwin Markham has seized upon that phase of the worker's experience and has fixed it in immortal verse under the title of "The Man with the Hoe," of whom he draws this mournfully tragic picture:

Bowed by the weight of centuries, he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground.

. . . . . .

Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes?
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
. . . . What to him
Are Plato and the swing of the Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song?
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop.

If from such an extremity of woe, even in theory, hope can be extracted, then surely there are few toilers who cannot revive themselves to interest and ambition.

The first requisite is to look for help within one's self. As a greater poet sang:

Rest is not quitting
The busy career,
Rest is the fitting
Of self to one's sphere.

He put into graceful rhyme the lesson learned by more than one farmer boy when in the old days he helped to enlarge the family income by making meat skewers.

First, the workers around the fireplace split out straight, four-cornered pieces of oak or hickory about as long as a lead pencil, pointed them at one end and whittled them roughly into cylindrical shape with a jack-knife. Finally, with a good mallet, they drove the rough-hewn peg through a round hole in an iron die, and the skewer came out smooth-finished and ready for the market.

This is a somewhat crude figure of what really happens in fitting most men to their jobs. Practically no men fit their jobs perfectly. There are are always small discrepancies. Even artistic geniuses, freest of all to follow their own inclinations, admit without hesitancy that they themselves suffer from deficiencies which are evident in their finished productions. The ambition of their lives is to improve themselves so that their work approaches more and more to perfection. The common worker must take a lesson from the page of his artist brother's notebook.

In his own work, within the sphere of his immediate task and beyond, in all that is directly related to that task, he must find

his inspiration constantly renewed. This he can do without leaving his field for a new field of labor; but by reflection and study upon what he is doing and how it reaches out and out in ever-increasing circles of influence and touches widening zone after widening zone of human interests. This self-inspiration can come even to the most wearied worker. That is the true "divinity" that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.

John Ruskin owes his place of renown in the world not chiefly to his literary style but to his sincere and impassioned message for social betterment. He began as a writer and wrote colorlessly and generally for some years. Then a new meaning came into his writings by his espousal of the cause of his friend Turner, the painter, whose work was criticised. Ruskin turned his pen to the defense of his friend. That impelled him to the study of painting. That in turn drew him from his earlier small task of defending a particular artist farther and farther into the vast field of art in general. Art led him on to its peculiar possession,

beauty; and the study of beauty drove him to a diligent search for the sources of beauty in the souls of people. But there the trail did not stop, for some people seemed to be too degraded, too ignorant, too insensible to appreciate or to express any æstheticism whatever in all their ugly lives; while others, relieved from the sordid grind for the bare necessities of life, had leisure to develop their inherent love for beauty into refinements of appreciation for it. Beauty, Ruskin thought, depended therefore upon the environment of people.

Naturally he went enthusiastically into social reform. His literary art now became secondary and was devoted with soul-warming enthusiasm to the purpose of raising human lives up to a plane of living where they would not only love beauty but would themselves grow beautiful in soul. A life of rich productiveness and a fame enduring and great were the results of such self-inspiration by continued following of the relations which a primary task holds to all the other parts of this closely-knitted-together world.

The acquired habit of following out from the smallest item of the commonplace world an endless chain of links reaching out to the rim of the universe, can be acquired. The philosopher Fichte saw in a grain of sand at the seashore the infinite complexity of the world which placed that grain exactly where it was, and made it necessary, if the position of that single grain had been different from what it was by a hair's breadth, to change the whole past history of the earth. Thoreau, who in one short trip down a New England river, saw more than many people see on a trip around the world, could spend hours absorbed in the contemplation of a blade of grass and its relationships with other grasses, shrubs, trees and all created things. Walt Whitman's biographer affirms that the good, gray poet, living in a humble house in Camden, secured far more pleasure in gazing at a simple blade of grass than most travelers obtain from viewing the Alps. Turner's classic reply to the lady who objected to the color in his paintings that she could never see such color in the sunset

as he painted on his canvasses, was the laconic, "But don't you wish you could?" opens the secret to the transformation of a monotonous world into one full of glow.

This open secret is practised most often by artists, but it is not limited to them. What a difference to make shoes for an unknown customer, to make the same shoes for an obscure captain, and to make the same shoes for the Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, Monarch of Europe! What a difference between digging a ditch in a city street and the same ditch before the immortal Argonne Forests!" "What are you digging this ditch for? asked a loiterer to a street laborer.

"Three dollars and a half a day!" chortlingly replied the man.

"What are you digging this ditch for?" asked the same man of the foreman.

"Kendrick, the contractor!" was his reply.

"What are you digging this ditch for?" he asked Kendrick the contractor.

"To give half a million people water!" was the instant rejoinder of large vision.

A young machinist was engaged upon the endless task of making a screw, spending the hours and days of his throbbing life upon the repetition of the same movements in an operation as meaningless and insignificant to him as the futile lappings of wavelets in a pond. Weary of his treadmill work, and pondering over more than one wild scheme of escape, ready for the seeds of social sedition or the temptations of soul-destroying narcotics, he stumbled upon the thought that his particular screw must have a place and function in the product of the factory! It was a new thought and therefore fascinating. He speculated upon the matter until it occurred to him to go down to the erecting floor at noon and ferret out that particular screw in the completed machine and see what it really did amount to in the whole affair.

Under that impulse he finished his lunch early, went down to the floor below, searched among the half-erected and completed machines until he found his own screw in place, studied what it did, and saw for the first time how necessary that insignificant-look-

ing piece of metal was for the whole machine. In all his life he never felt a greater thrill than the one coming from the discovery that his work counted! There it was,—a necessity for something larger, a performer of a distinct service, the part and parcel not only of this machine but of a whole factory! His whole being vibrated with new importance and that afternoon he went back to the toilsome labor with an entirely different atmosphere surrounding every movement he made.

The screw-making itself assumed new interest. He now understood, in the light of the operation the screw performed in the whole piece of mechanism, just why some dimensions must be exact, some parts perfectly finished, and some left with but approximate conformity to the blue-print drawing. From those hints he immediately invented new methods of work which resulted in more rapid production. He was careful where care was necessary and lenient with himself where it was not so necessary. The process turned from a dead, monotonous, even application of attention to a

process alive with all sorts of emotional changes. There were periods of relaxation and then moments of critical application; measurements to the hair and estimates with some latitude; surfaces finished with artistic polishing which would shine before the beholder's eye in the assembled whole, and other parts roughly finished off because they would be hidden from sight when the screw went finally into place.

The story of the newly aroused ambition would be too long to tell in full. It led to a larger and larger study of the whole machine of which the screw was but a small part. Books followed daily observation; underlying principles of construction started out of ordinary processes, and made them glow with innate significance; methods changed and improved under the hand of the young man. Before he knew it he was a foreman; to-day he is still in the same business, but a superintendent, busy with studying the same machine and busy making improvements in its manufacture.

What this boy discovered for himself has been revealed by the engineering courses

which alternate two weeks in college study with two weeks of actual work in a shop. The college students work beside the other boys continuously employed in the manual labor of the enterprise. Both perform the same operations, but the reports of the foremen state that the college boys "take more interest" in the things they make and the operations they perform than do the other boys who are concerned only with the task under their immediate hands.

The transition from aimless drudgery in which the soul takes no delight and the worker finds no inspiration, to an opposite state of mind wherein, though the labor stay the same, a new world of sensation is created within the man by feeling his work to be an essential part of a sublime harmony is the theme of "The Lost Chord," the opening lines of which describe that transition:

> Seated one day at the organ
> I was weary and ill at ease,
> And my fingers wandered idly
> Over the noisy keys.
> I knew not what I was playing,
> Nor what I was dreaming then,

But I struck one chord of music,
Like the sound of a Great Amen.
It flooded the crimson twilight
Like the close of an Angel's Psalm,
And it lay on my fevered spirit
With the touch of an infinite calm.

It quieted pain and sorrow,
Like love overcoming strife,
It seemed the harmonious echo
From our discordant life,
It linked all perplexing meaning,
Into one of perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence
As if it were loath to cease.

Splendid indeed is it for a young man to enter upon the vocation for which he is fitted both by nature and training and in which he finds an answer to the deepest calls of his talents and soul. But if any man finds himself not so situated and yet unable to escape into some other occupation, despondency is not the only alternative. He, like a dove struck by a thunderstorm, may turn and face the wind, and by it be carried above the storm where the sun still shines and all the purple-black

clouds are turned to red and gold. Napoleon once thought of resigning from the army. When he saw military power as the means to world-empire and not as a mere means of self-support it aroused the genius within him. Bibbs Sheridan, referred to above, eventually was compelled by the death of one brother and failure of the other to face the maintenance of the family's place in the world. Then he saw the meaning of business, the immediate value of the shop, and the former hateful roar of the machines turned into a harmony of efficiency, all directed toward what his heart desired. His father finally renders this verdict, "Honest, Mama, he works like a gorilla."

Chapter IV

The Indolence of Genius

A YOUNG man teaching in a country school was compelled to add the duties of the janitor to those of instructor. That required him to rise early in the morning, trudge through the snow a mile or two from his boarding house to the little, one-roomed schoolhouse, and there start a fire in the old-fashioned wood-burning stove preparatory to the arrival of his half-frozen pupils. Disliking the task like a sensible young man and pondering over the problem like a philosopher, he finally concluded to apply to his situation some of the chemistry he was studying out of school hours. At night he allowed the fire to die out, laid it again carefully with shavings, twigs and sticks of wood, and then arranged a bottle of acid and some sugar connected with the old-fashioned

clock on the wall, so that at just an hour before school the clock would tip the acid from the bottle on the sugar, the chemical combination would ignite the shavings, and the fire would start automatically!

On the night when this arrangement was first made, the young man informed the farmer with whom he was boarding that he would not be compelled the next morning to start for school till half an hour before the opening time. To the farmer's objections about a cold schoolhouse for the children, the teacher assured him that a fire would kindle itself. Sure enough, next morning to the eyes anxiously watching the school chimney away across the snow-covered fields, promptly at the minute set, a growing wisp of smoke shot up into the still morning air, and when the teacher arrived later he found a stove full of blazing logs, and a warm and cozy room.

The news quickly spread through the community. The whole thing looked uncanny. It smacked to the ignorant too much of possible relationships with the lord of lower fires to make the invention quite

comfortable. Those who were superior to that superstitious objection, however, immediately hit upon another which has done yeoman service in many similar instances. The young man was duly charged with and quickly condemned for "laziness." There was no other explanation for such ingenuity. No man but a lazy man would ever think of doing such a thing. Only laziness would take that much trouble to avoid the simple and direct task of getting up before daylight, according to the time-honored custom, and lighting a fire by hand in the good old-fashioned way.

Had they followed that same young fellow to college and seen him there at study, all their virtuous conclusions about his laziness would have been confirmed. That student was too lazy to get down his books from a shelf and study them! It is the naked truth! Instead, he made a table, bookrack, and clock combined, and loaded his books all at once into a magazine, and then at the moment set beforehand by him, when the time was up at which a lesson should be learned, a wooden arm descended,

swept the book off the table into its proper receptacle and a second wooden lever pushed another book into place ready for study. This was system with a vengeance! Likewise this scheme reduced the mechanical work of study—a no small item to an intense student—to the minimum. It is not wonderful that stupefied human nature, looking on and not yet quite escaped from its chrysalis state of materialism into intellectuality, condoned its own mental inertia by calling the inventor "lazy."

Possibly this characterization did not change in some of their minds even when this same young student left his university to spend his life in the Western mountains, exploring their recesses and studying their life, and leaving the name of John Muir, naturalist and writer, forever fixed in one of the grandest glaciers of the world. His intensely active later life, as well as his early life on a farm under the direction of a thrifty and hard-working Scotch father, both belied the charge of any laziness in a man who used his mind wherever he could to save his muscles, but who demonstrated

by his thousands of miles of weary foot travel, his endurance of the wilderness hardships, and his accurate explorations that he could work muscularly as hard as any man when it was necessary. He is an outstanding example of a youth suspected of laziness because he was possessed of genius.

This innate disposition of man to save himself from exertion has led the geniuses of the world, in spite of the crude opposition of their fellows, to invent the multitude of labor-saving devices which are the peculiar pride and the measure of our civilization. Viewed from this point of vantage it is not too much to say that civilization is built upon laziness! For surely, if that impulse in man immediately to expend his muscular energy with the least thought had its way, thinkers would be at a discount, novel methods and machines would be universally shunned as they have been on so many occasions, and the world would yet bend its weary back under the aching burdens of centuries. The self-styled willing workers, calm in the virtuousness of

their own diligence, would imitate the complacency of the red Indian when he saw his first bicycle. "Humph!" was the savage's prideful remark, "Heap lazy white man! Walk sitting down!" So it will ever be to some portion of the world's inhabitants who first combat the invention of a labor-saving machine and contemn the inventor, only eventually to profit by that impulse in him to find a better and easier way of doing a hard job.

The boy who was set to changing the valves on a pumping engine and wishing, with true boyish laziness, to avoid such a monotonous and exacting task, arranged a string that did the work better, and so invented the self-acting steam engine, probably drew down upon his head the censure of his employer and his parents for his indolent love of play. Yet what a diligent mind he had! Archimedes, with his levers and his figures, must have appeared to be a lover of indolence in an age of the active soldier and popular athlete, but during the siege of Syracuse he was the hero of the hour because by his ingenious employment

of the lever and sunglass he outdid by stratagem the clumsy attempts of direct action warfare.

Men of literary or artistic talent by the very nature of their professions have been singled out for particularly unsympathetic misunderstanding or positive opposition. John Whittier, the Quaker poet, tells how, when he was overwhelmed by seeing unexpectedly his first printed verses, he was rebuked by his stern New England father and recalled to the hard job of fence-making. His early tendency toward literature was characteristically revealed in his opposition to the soul-deadening toil of the farm. It was his sister who preserved the following boyish lines showing this rebellion:

> Must I always swing the flail,
> And help to fill the milking pail?
> I do not wish to be a fool,
> I wish to go away to school.

Alice and Phœbe Carey were looked upon askance by their pioneer neighbors because they would withdraw themselves to the attic to dabble away in verse-writing on

that old Ohio farm whose woodlands inspired the lines:

> Of all the beautiful pictures,
> That hang on memory's wall,
> The one of the dear old forest,
> Seemeth the best of all.

While the men hewed the timber of that and similar forests and the women were busy with their pots and pans, and knitting and spinning and weaving, these two sisters sought refuge in their sanctum under the eaves and there, safe from the admonitions of the physically busy, they could pursue their budding literary work to their heart's content till their fame allowed them to escape the pioneer environment for the more congenial atmosphere of New York City. The literary belt had not in that day extended as far west as Ohio.

Lincoln's story-telling and his love for firelight study brought suspicion upon him in spite of his rail-splitting ability. He says of himself that he did not like to work but loved to sit around and read or tell stories with a group of good fellows. There was

something in his leisurely movements and in his drawl that would readily have laid him open to the insinuation of laziness had it not been for his herculean strength and his great height, both of which seemed to fit in with his leisurely movement.

That gigantic genius, Doctor Samuel Johnson, who wrote the first English dictionary, constantly upbraided himself for laziness. He looked the part, for no more slovenly dressed man could well be found in London in his day. He would appear with his wig awry, his collar unbuttoned and open, his shirt front embellished with remnants of last night's viands, his knee buckles loose, his stockings wrinkled and his shoes unbuckled. But as soon as he opened his mouth in speech, says a contemporary, one forgot instantly all of these untoward blemishes of appearance and stood lost in the admiration of the workings of the gigantic mind. Here was a man too physically indolent to rise betimes, to dress himself properly, even while conducting, with ponderous gallantry, a fine lady to her coach on the street, yet whose mental labors

were prodigious, and who could write an article for a journal while the printer's boy waited for it, and let it go to press without ever again seeing it until it appeared in print.

The devotees of systematic effort and of adherence to the canons of conventional diligence would be horrified to read the psychograph of Henri Poincaré, one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers of all times. In his last year he wrote no less than eighty abstruse, original mathematical papers. Yet he was most dilatory in his application. He would begin a paper without knowing how he would finish it; work at it spasmodically, quit as soon as he met with a difficulty. His attention was always flighty; he hated systematic application, followed no regular habits of work, and should by all the laws and approved patterns of assiduity been classed with the no-accounts and vagrants of the earth. Instead his genius left behind a series of works which are the wonder and delight of those who love to delve into the endless relationships of lines and numbers.

But the prince of the tribe of indolent geniuses was the Irish-born Oliver Goldsmith. He was both prince and pauper because he stands forth as such a singular example not only of shiftless laziness in early life but also of the conquest over innate and early nourished propensities. For he won his place in the world of letters as much by his hard and uninspired drudgery as he did by his genius. Genius was there without a doubt; probably as it was always there, in his early days as well as in his later ones, but unless there had been coupled with it the toil of the hack writer, that genius would have remained as immortally dormant as it has become immortally glorious.

Oliver, "poor Oliver," we almost involuntarily say, learned his letters at home, and then went to a private school conducted by a retired army officer who loved more to make impromptu Irish verses and tell ghost stories than he did to teach. That schooling was followed by an attendance at several other schools where Oliver was hooted at by his playmates for his under-sized body and his peculiar simplicity, and where he

was treated by his instructors as a hopeless dunce. At Trinity College, Dublin, where he went for his higher training, he left an unenviable record of neglect of studies, low grades in examinations, and punishments for buffoonery and night parties held in his room with town roysterers like himself.

At twenty-one years of age he returned to the humble cottage of his widowed mother, with little learning, vain as a peacock, dressed in loud-colored clothes, ready to idle away his hours at cards, or playing the flute, or spending the days of summer in fishing and the winter evenings in telling ghost stories. When a purse was made up to send him to America, he left on a fine horse with many farewells, but rode back again in six weeks mounted upon a sorry nag, with all his money gone, and announced that the ship for America had sailed while he was at a party. Another purse made up to enable him to study law went by the gaming table. A further loan took him to Edinburgh University where he pretended to study medicine, though he never acquired enough knowledge in it to fit him for even

the humblest position in that art. In later life he endeavored to cover this deficiency by grandiloquently remarking that he never practiced medicine but merely prescribed for his friends.

"Pray, then, Doctor, make it your enemies!" heartlessly replied Beauclerk.

Immediately following Edinburgh came that pilgrimage of vagabondage which carried him aimlessly over much of Central Europe and into Italy. While superficially it was prompted by desire for study at continental universities, no one can doubt that it was an irrepressible outbreak of the indolence inherent in him. He was an accomplished vagrant, making his way by begging or, in true lackadaisical fashion, by playing his flute at peasant dances, sleeping anywhere indoors or out, and keeping company with all kinds of strolling people like himself. At the age of twenty-eight he landed again in England at Dover without a shilling in his pocket, without a degree to his name, with little learning in his head, and not a diligent or thrifty habit to his character.

But from that time his ascent began. He settled down to work. He became an usher in a school, a position too bitterly humiliating for even such as he to bear, and fled from it to the equally bitter if not less humiliating drudgery of a hack writer; then back to ushering, and back again to writing, from the frying pan into the fire, and from the fire into the frying pan again; from pillar to post, doing errands for druggists, living anywhere, eating anything, eking out a miserable livelihood, but underneath all the misery of it learning the single and sublime secret of man's true success, the conquest of laziness by the divine art of work.

The crisis came when his landlady brought in the sheriff to arrest him for debt and he hurriedly sent for Doctor Johnson, amongst whose numerous and variegated acquaintances Goldsmith had been numbered for some time. The great Doctor forwarded a guinea by messenger and promised to follow himself; which he speedily did, to find Oliver discussing his bankruptcy over a bottle of wine purchased with the advanced loan. In the discussion

of ways and means which followed, Johnson discovered that Goldsmith had, between the moment of his dry duties, composed a poem, "The Traveler," and seeing at a glance or two that it contained matter of worth, went out, sold it to a bookseller, and returned with sixty guineas, which settled the immediate debts of the author. The published work initiated both that fame and that literary career which raised the erstwhile vagrant from his association with beggars, tramps, streetwalkers, and the low-lived of London's streets to the company of Johnson, Burke, Garrick, Reynolds, and other leading lights of genius in that day, and to a position in letters that neither his early humble beginnings nor his continued vanities of extravagance and grievous weaknesses of character can ever obscure.

Though he kept up his gaming, though he was followed by beggars and borrowers to whom he threw gold lavishly, though he gave away even his bedclothes and slept in a ripped-open feather bed, though to his hot shame and bitter embarrassment he would talk in society like a parroting idiot,

and though writing on zoölogy he did insist angrily that he moved his upper jaw while eating, still the divine power to work clung to him. His writings were so varied and many in the fields of fiction, poetry, drama, history, and science, all touched with such refinement of taste in style, that Johnson could well say in the poet's famous epitaph that he touched almost every field of literature and he touched none that he did not adorn.

What internal battles that poor heart suffered in his conquest of himself no one probably will ever know. Viewed properly, his life is an inspiration to any and all who battle with forces within themselves that have come there first by inheritance and then by environment, which have crystallized all unconsciously the first fluid tendencies into iron-hard chains of habit. All may not possess the genius which made Goldsmith world-famous; but every one, like Goldsmith before his genius was recognized either by himself or others, may do what he did—overcome both inheritance and environment and build upon a foundation of

ruin and rubbish a temple fair to look upon. Though Goldsmith himself never was permitted—possibly because he presented himself as a clerical candidate in a bright red suit—to preach a vocal sermon, his life has in it a real message to those who would fight a good fight.

The purpose of bringing together these few instances of misunderstood genius is not alone to make a plea for more intelligent sympathy for this peculiar class—though that intent is worthy and worthwhile—but to inspire a more intelligent attitude on the part of all those who have to deal with forms of pseudo-laziness, either in children or in themselves. The lives of notable men who have overcome prejudice and who have hewed out their own destinies in spite of the paralyzing predictions of life-failure based upon their rebellion against common and conventional, and ofttimes provincial modes of earning a livelihood, which they abhorred, ought to be an inspiration to those who find themselves in the similar grip of circumstances within and without. The message from such lives is this: Do not swerve from

the high purpose of devotion to that life-work to which the inner gift calls, but remember that the gaining of that goal comes only through the conquering of those spasmodic habits which love idleness, and through their replacement with steady habits of hard work.

Chapter V

Plateaus of Ease

At an automobile show an enthusiast for a certain style of engine was showing his friend the fine points of the car he so admired. While extolling the power of the engine, its economy, its speed, and its silence in operation, he noticed a small piece of tissue paper lying carelessly and undisturbed on the hood of the car. Being assured by that that the engine was not running, and wanting to show his friend how silent was this powerful motor, he stepped up to the attendant and respectfully asked if the engine might be started for a few moments. The smiling attendant opened the hood and showed the astounded admirer that the engine was running at full speed without emitting a sound or tremor enough to dislodge the tissue paper.

That picture often comes up in my mind

in contrast with a man who stands for a type of fussy inefficiency. Everybody has seen him. In my younger days I was deceived as effectively as the automobile enthusiast by just such an individual. He was tall, broad-shouldered, handsome, with an attractive, even sparkling personality, and he was a busy man. He had started life as an insurance salesman, had made at least a show of success and persuaded himself that all he needed was a larger field. He moved to a great city, bustled his way about for a time. and drifted out of insurance. Then he took up teaching for a while, teaching mingled with several other whole and half projects, in which he was always busily endeavoring to convince somebody who had money to invest. People's imagination—at least some of the people who had no money—were captured by his business and bustle. He seemed full of energy, always on the go, radiating enthusiasm, springy in step, buoyant in temper, optimistic in temperament, boyish in his hope.

But, he never arrived. Gradually he went down life's hillside step by step,

growing shabbier as the years went by, grayer and more pathetic, until he died in obscurity.

The fault which prevents such a man from rising to any height of prominence in his world is plainly due to his changeableness; or, to put it negatively, to his lack of persistency. He is unstable in all his ways. Energy he has, and gives it out in spurts and puffs, but in him something is lacking, some weariness of mind or disgust at monotony which makes it unbearable for him to continue anything after the excitement of novelty has worn off. Usually he makes a fair initial success of an enterprise; then he slackens his upward pace; then abandons the whole project.

The cure is evident to everybody but the sufferer himself. He must stick to something. That requires, first, an honest and searching self-analysis which puts sternly aside all specious arguments for making changes and asks without flinching, "Do I change because circumstances dictate a change? Or, really and honestly, because down in my own heart, I love change? "

This gets at the core of the matter and is the first step at diagnosis.

The next step is the treatment. That requires another unflinching bit of discipline. The vacillating man must take up one thing and finish that. That task may be a small one, quickly done, or at least not lasting long enough to exhaust his patience. Do that small task. Finish it. Then sit down and gloat over the finishing of it. Revel in the feeling of completing something, putting it out of the way forever, or starting it out into the world upon its beneficent and eternal journey of doing good. Hang up the motto, "This one thing I do!" and like the famous boy on the burning deck, stay by it until the job is done.

Another form of temperamental indolence appears on the surface exactly opposite to that of the busy inefficiency just described. Quietness of manner and method are its characteristics; persistency its most obvious quality. Yet it lands the man at the same place in the world as vacillating changeableness. They are alike in that they soon strike plateaus of achievement;

one immediately goes down hill again and begins to climb some other way; the other plods along on the low level of mediocrity all his life.

Take the actual case of a young man who, thirty years ago, possessed many qualities for a marked success in the world. He had talents in several directions. Blessed with a fine body, well-boned and muscled, he engaged in outdoor exercises such as skating, hunting, swimming and boating with superior ease. He could have easily made himself a champion had he applied himself to competitive athletics, though he never did that. He was a self-taught musician above the average, so good that he played at an Atlantic summer resort with a band. He picked up the trade of painting from his father and made his living at it part of his life. He could work well in wood; made fine picture-frames holding enlargements of the photographs he himself made; manufactured a banjo and inlaid it with pearl; built a wonderfully neat-trimmed boat; had one of the first phonographs that came out; was studious, thoughtful, steady,

diligent, with an irreproachable character and fine personality. What more factors for success could anyone ask?

Yet to-day, in middle life, he is occupying a good, but obscure and ordinary position with a great corporation where advancement is limitless. He cannot be called a failure in life. Far from it. But nevertheless he has failed to arrive, failed to achieve that high place to which in the estimation of his friends his numerous natural gifts seemed to destine him. He is a sample of a great company of men and women in the world who superficially possess the most promising attributes of character and aptitudes of success, but who somehow lack some internal spring of aggressiveness—a lack that leaves them drifting like a launch with a dead engine.

The two examples just given are by no means isolated cases, but are instances of a widespread malady, as recent investigations into the life-ambitions of men and women indicate. A sociologist became interested in the problem of the standard of life maintained by many kinds of workers

and began an exhaustive study of their early ambitions and their actual achievements. He found that in many walks of life the young man and woman forced to earn their own living start out with a full determination to achieve a goal. That goal is perfectly clear and definitely outlined to them. Usually it consists in some material possession, most often of the ordinary necessities of food, clothing, furniture and house room, with some special luxury thrown in which happens to be dear to the heart of the worker.

Now the curious ending of such an ambition is this: Whenever the youthful worker achieves his standard, he is satisfied. If the girl's ideal of life includes finery of a certain price, she strives till she earns enough to satisfy that desire. Then she stops striving. If she can earn enough in four days to buy what she wants she works four days a week and rests the other two. The same is true of the average man; as soon as he succeeds in attaining to the standard of life set before him by his early environment or education, he also stops.

Life seems to hold no further inducement to advance. A paralysis of ambition intervenes. The plateau of satisfaction has been reached and henceforth lazy grazing in the green and level pastures is the order of existence.

The cure for that kind of laziness which affects ambition is easy to suggest but difficult to apply. It is hinted at in the ambition first possessed by such people. How does that arise? Why do they have an ideal of life at all? Why not in complete indolence accept the station to which they were born and never strive to elevate themselves an inch above that?

The early ambition has its source in many things. Sometimes the home-training is inspiring enough to foster it. A mother with unsatisfied cravings for clothes may inspire her daughter with an ambition to have what her mother missed and counts so dear. A father may want to see his boy have a better time than he had, and therefore gives that son an initial impetus toward as high a goal as the father can himself, with his restricted vision, imagine for his

son. Sometimes the school environment, the mixing with children of a better class, inspires and fixes the determination of poorer children; sometimes books do it; sometimes a teacher, a local celebrity, a doctor, a lawyer, a politician. Somewhere along the path of life the child has obtained an ideal and sets that before himself unconsciously as containing all that life can hold of satisfaction and happiness. Once that is achieved, life's end has been reached, its purpose fulfilled; striving has brought its fruition; "rest comes sure and soon."

Such ambitions achieved and such life left empty is by no means confined to the working classes. Psychologists who devote some of their energy to character-analysis and vocational counsel receive confessions of more significance than the average religious admission of guilt. One such comes to my mind, delivered by a fine young business man not yet forty. He confessed that his life was an empty and dolorous existence, void of happiness, aimless, useless, drifting, simply because he had attained to the ambition to which

his early efforts had been spurred. Like thousands of other men he found his first real urge to success in the wife and small family which he had. His soul was set upon building up a business that would, in case he should die, afford his precious ones the same income and guarantee them the same social position they had been accustomed to during his life. He succeeded. He built up his business, amassed his fortune, secured it by all known safeguards, and then asked why he kept on laboring, he said, "I am like the bulls I once saw in a Spanish bull-fight. They came in, rushed around, fought their fight, died and were dragged out and thrown into a hole! That's me!"

A more glorious end awaited him—for he died in the late war splendidly saving his country—but he was miserable at the time of our conversation. I can imagine what a relief, what a chance that war offered him! And I imagine, too, that his home-parting and his last dying hour were both comforted by the thought that he *had* left his family safe and secure from the privations of poverty. Possibly, too, he lived a glori-

ously renewed life in the few months he spent in service to a new ambition and a new vision.

How to feed the fires of ambition so that they may never die out seems an utterly hopeless task to men who are satisfied,—a task as utterly hopeless to them as it would be to quench those same fires in the ambitious soul. To go on, men must force themselves to go on. Recently a man just past middle life, a bachelor, without the usual incentives to continued effort, already worth twenty-five millions of dollars, said with a smile, "Yes, I have made some money; but I have started into something now in which I may lose it all!" He may lose his money, but not his soul. Any more than boys lose their lives, timid boys who have learned to paddle in shallow water along the shore, until some older fellow carries them out into deep water, throws them overboard and says, "Sink or swim!" They always swim.

The plateau-dweller must force himself to sink or swim. Let him ponder the words of Perseus, a young man to whom Pallas

Athena, the goddess, came one day and said, "Perseus, there are two kinds of men; one kind that like the stalled oxen spend their lives in safety at home. And when they die they go down into the unknown, unhonored and unsung, and the world knows them no more. There are other souls fired with supreme purposes, who go out into the wilds of the world, perform great deeds and return to glory, or go down to heroic deaths in high endeavor. Them the gods remember and after their death take them to themselves and their names are never lost from the earth. Perseus, which will you be?"

The youth meditated a moment and then replied, "Pallas Athena, after your words I would be ashamed to be any less than I might be. I choose the life of high endeavor."

Then the goddess unfolded to him the plans of his first great mission to go and bring back the head of the awful Gorgon, the Medusa, whose locks were serpents and whose countenance was so hideous that it would turn to frozen stone any one who

looked upon it. She told him how to secure the shield, the sword, and the sandals of the various gods, and then led him out, fully equipped, to a high cliff overhanging the sea. Thence he was to launch his flight over the unknown waters upon a frightfully perilous journey. Naturally be hesitated to take the step that would decide his destiny forever.

"Why do you hesitate?" urged Athena, "Know you not that you are armed with the arms of the gods? Cast yourself off upon the wings of the wind and trust that the sandals of Mercury will bear you up!"

Perseus made the plunge. The sandals carried him far away; the arms of the gods and the stout spirit in his heart made him victor. He returned to Greece a hero. But he did not stop there. Exploit after exploit yielded to his prowess until he won a kingdom at home, an immortal position amongst the mythical heroes of Greece and Italy, and through his son, gave his name to Persia. This myth, like every story of adventure, instills the lesson of venturesomeness. "The reason men do not accomplish

more is because they do not undertake more!" is the motto printed upon one business man's stationery. A man must commit himself to destiny or stagnate.

But it may be objected that myths and god-inspired adventures are gone forever from the prosaic world of modern industrialism. A man may sigh for Pallas Athena to come and send him on some high mission and he will die waiting. What will the modern man do? Begin where he is. Some years ago *Pearson's Magazine* published a series of articles on "Dan Tank" written by Peter Clark Macfarlane, who takes his characters, with few embellishments, from life. Dan woke up one day to find himself a drunken, good-for-nothing roustabout, and concluded to reform. He set before his blurred vision Washington and Lincoln and Grant and some other lofty examples of heroic mold and concluded to be like them. But the path to virtue and fame did not seem immediately to open up. No gleaming ladder of easy ascent appeared to slide down from the golden clouds of glorious service to invite

his eager feet to climb upward and ever upward.

Dan was puzzled. The usual stories of success did not read that way. Then he took stock of himself and concluded to begin right where he was. At the moment he was in a rather low-down saloon and the first thing he saw to be done was to sweep the floor and clean the cuspidors. That he did, and continued at his hanger-on chores until one day a fight started. Being a man of more than usual brute strength, he sailed in and cleaned out the place and after peace settled down proceeded to set the furniture to rights as usual. The bartender cautiously thrust his head up from behind the counter and asked, "What's your name?"

"Dan Tank," was the reply.

"All right, Dan. You're on!" And Dan was on, and climbed from there to be the boss of the city.

But this is fiction? No; it is life; that is always the power and the beauty of fiction; it is a rather conservative account of life, for truth is too strange to write with hope that it will be accepted as truthful. But if

a man must have actual occurrences let him look around him. Recently on a railroad train I fell in with some students who were returning to college after vacation. Naturally these young men turned the conversation to the dearest thought of their hearts—success. The conversation drifted around to this very topic of reaching a place in life where satisfaction stilled further endeavor. Some one insisted that the cure for such a state was a new venture, a deliberate—though prudent— embarkation upon a campaign for a larger prize.

A man of about thirty years, evidently a business man, who had been listening with a smile of complacence to the boys, at this point broke in, "You're right. You got to pull up stakes and start over again. I know it for I am doing it. I lived all my life in a fair-sized Southern town, got a job in the biggest store there, and worked my way up to the best clerkship they had. Then I stopped. Not long ago I got to thinking about the matter, and I concluded that I could stay just where I was the rest of my life. I was up against a dead wall.

It was an awful temptation to settle right down and stay there. But I made up my mind to take the plunge. So I went to the boss and told him I was done. He argued and then laughed and said he guessed I'd be back.

"Well, I struck out north, wandered around awhile, until I struck St. Louis, and went into ——— (naming a big hardware company) and told them I wanted a job. They told me to call again and see their personnel man, but I told them I was going to see another firm right away, and so they sent me to see the man I wanted. Well, here I am, on my way East to take up training for a new job with one of the biggest firms in this country. The opportunity is before me and if I don't make good, it's nobody's fault but my own."

As I swing around in my chair and look out of a window I can almost see the smoke of a great furniture factory in a neighboring town. It is a noted firm, controlled now by the sons of its founder, who "began where he was" years ago. He used to go from house to house mending furniture. Now

and then people gave him broken chairs which he took home and mended in the evening and then sold them. Energy, thrift, prudence and indomitable ambition put him into possession of a little shop. That, instead of exhausting his ambition, only added fuel to it. He grew, enlarged, surrounded himself with strong helpers, and his great factories to-day stand as a monument to beginning where you are.

Another city is the home of a great department store started by a Jew who once traveled the environs of that city with a peddler's pack upon his back. It is almost wearisome to recount examples. The very monotony of illustrations proves that a law is at work and the rule for the achievement of vast success is to begin where you are and keep on going, launching out upon new Odysseys of adventure every time a Troy is captured and subdued. No doubt Wanamaker would have liked very much to have delivered his first customer's order of goods with prancing steeds, nickel-harnessed, attached to a yellow delivery wagon, with his name painted along both sides. But, not

having such a thing in his possession, he seized a handcart and delivered the goods himself. After that he never quit growing, either as a man or a business man.

> O small beginnings, ye are great and strong,
> Based on a faithful heart and weariless brain.

The way to begin is to begin; and after that, begin again. When a cardinal told a sprightly French lady the tradition of the martyrdom of St. Denis who, after decapitation, walked two leagues with his own head in his hand, and emphasized the two leagues especially, the lady remarked, "The distance is nothing. It is only the first step that counts!"

True; whenever a man takes his life in his hands to begin a new enterprise, it is only the first step that counts. But it is

> Better to sink beneath the shock
> Than molder piecemeal on the rock.

It is an axiom of prudence to look before you leap, but it is death and decay to look and not to leap.

Chapter VI

Natural-Born Laziness of Youth

THERE is a type of indolence which is natural-born. But on that account it does not receive from the undiscerning mercy or excuse. The same venom of condemnation for idlers is visited upon a growing boy as upon a veteran loafer or an inveterate no-account, exuding greasy laziness from every pore of his body. Such condemnation may be well intended; it may spring unwillingly to the lips of parents urged by their fear that their son will eventually degenerate into a sample of the aforesaid vagabond. Its causes are first, ignorance of the true state of the boy; and again, that ignorance of cures which drives the ordinary, well-meaning person to wearied and wearisome nagging.

The truth of the matter is that all normal boys go through a stage of laziness. That

is due to the fact that children do not, like Minerva, leap from the brows of their parents, full-grown and fully equipped adults. Easy enough it is to discern this truth with regard to children's bodies. But even here lies a fallacy productive of much false deduction. For it is assumed that the body of a boy is merely a smaller copy of what his body will be when he is fully grown. If that were true, if a baby merely grew continuously and steadily, keeping the first proportions of all its members intact, it would be a frightful monstrosity with an enlarged head, a great, bulky body, and rudimentary arms and legs. Its body does not grow continuously and all alike in its several organs and parts. A child changes as it grows to adulthood. New organs develop. Some old organs grow more rapidly than others. At different times and seasons the whole body grows more rapidly than at other times, and some organs develop faster at one time than at another. The child, in respect to its body, is far from being merely a little man or little woman.

What is true of the body becomes, by that strange parallelism which links body and mind and character into an indissoluble trinity, true also of the whole personality. The person grows, and the growing changes from stage to stage. What was entirely natural and wholly desirable in one stage becomes in another as the rags of a cast-off garment, outgrown forever and as hopelessly discarded as an old fashion. Human growth is not a smooth incline, but a series of steps, irregular in their height and separated into staircases by a number of landings.

The clue to the kind of stages through which youth goes from babyhood to manhood is said by scientists to be discoverable in the social stages through which the whole race has gone. The parallelism between the individual's development and the race's social development to civilization is not exact in all cases, and some writers even deny its cogency in any case. But the theory does serve, in the absence of a better one, to indicate crudely, at least, the various steps taken by a baby from birth to

twentieth-century manhood. The ideal child begins as a savage, becomes in turn a barbarian, a nomad, an agriculturist, a knight-errant, and finally a modern, prosaic, hard-working man. At least each boy may exhibit more or less marked characteristics of each one of these roughly marked and merging social states.

Now, one of the chief characteristics of the savage and the barbarian is his laziness. He hates prolonged and diligent application. With unbridled ferocity he will fight his battles with his enemies, and in the chase he will exhibit tireless persistency. But these outbursts of energy are but temporary when compared with the slow, steady, regular, daily labor of an active, civilized man's lifetime. His savage brother exhibits spurts of supreme energy in limited directions but alternates these with a lolling and lazy indolence that consumes the day with eating, smoking, drinking, and sleeping.

When, therefore, the son of a civilized worker exhibits the characteristics of his savage or barbarian forbears, let no one be

discouraged. He is merely passing through a legitimate stage in his development. Unless that stage is intensified in his experience by injurious nagging from his elders, it will in all likelihood disappear with the passing of short trousers and be followed by normal diligence.

Some of the greatest men have exhibited traces of such a stage. Charles Darwin's father was greatly exasperated by his son's barbarian tendencies toward rat-baiting and such pastimes. Yet the same son later worked himself almost to death, to a nervous exhaustion which did not permit him to see visitors more than half an hour at a time, and he says that he himself was amazed at his own diligence shown in reading through vast numbers of reports, volumes, and pamphlets on scientific subjects.

Even a more illuminating example was furnished by the early life of Patrick Henry who showed not one hint of his later brilliancy in intellect or oratory. He alternated, like the true savage, between hunting trips, filling days of precious time, with fits of unbelievable indolence, so that all who

knew him despaired of his ever amounting to even a respectable member of the community. He tried, one after another, several careers and failed in each until he found in persuading juries a place for his powerfully moving oratory.

Boys in such stages require the utmost sympathy and patience, combined with the greatest intelligence and the firmest of determination in training. It is easy to go to one extreme or the other. The first fatal blunder is to call their condition "laziness." Nobody knows better than these spasmodic idlers themselves how much energy they can develop on occasion. In fact, in their hearts they often sneer at the dull and stupid low pressure of ordinary people. Beside some of their intense exploits of action, the daily duties of the home-grown citizen are as heavy slumber.

Calling the state laziness often brings with it a treatment as pernicious as the diagnosis is false. Extreme measures are taken to enforce rigorously a régime of mechanical exactness. The parents of such a boy, obsessed with but one notion of char-

acter training, that of habit-making—and but one method of making habits, that of punishment—may by their erroneous harshness drive their son entirely away from any desire to labor. If, by their training, the parents associate inextricably the idea of work with all that is disagreeable and painful in their son's experience, they need not be surprised if such an association crystallizes itself into a weld that will hold forever in that son's life.

On the other hand, to go to the opposite extreme of foolish softness is just as bad. To accept as final this stage, to condone it, to offer as a reason for its existence some fanciful weakness of constitution or inherited refinement of disposition, which disdains labor, or to attribute it to some maternal impression, act simply as so many solidifiers of what is normally a passing phase into a hard and fixed habit of life.

Steadily and faithfully must the ideal of normal, persevered-in productive labor be held before the boy. He must be told that his present state—which to him is often as great a mystery and as terrible a plague

as it is to his friends—is but a passing one due to perfectly normal growth, and that in time it will wear off and be succeeded by that power coveted by all leaders of men, to work with steady power and winning might.

During that temporary onset, there are some duties that must be done, some absolutely necessary functions to be performed with regularity and dispatch. From these there can be no relief. Reduce these to a minimum and show that each is necessary from the circumstances of the situation and that not one is an arbitrary requirement, or a mere matter of inflicted duty, or a training for some future and more or less improbable situation in which the boy may some day find himself.

With it all, remember that time alone will cure the disease. It is a normal disposition, a passing stage, an attack that has its onset, its incubation, its rise to a crisis, and its gradual decline, leaving when rightly treated some sequellæ of good. Also, keep ever in mind that it is not a voluntary and willful act of the boy that

makes him as lazy as he is. It is his inheritance. It came by right of valid descent straight from his ancestors, perhaps his father or his mother, or his grandparents, or great-grandparents. It belongs to youth; and with many other inherited tendencies of youth, should have been eliminated in his forbears. It is something that should not be taken too seriously, but should be taken with enough seriousness by parents and others to call forth on their part the exercise of intelligent sympathy and kindly firmness that expresses itself in calm words of advice, constructive policies of exercises, hunting trips, fishing excursions, boating, swimming, and all those other activities which belong to savages and now repeat themselves in the mock campaigns of our youth on vacations.

Closely akin to the barbaric indolence of youth is the adult's general weariness with life. It differs from staleness in that it is perfectly natural. Unfortunately it is not generally known that such a weariness exists. Each man or woman who in the natural process of growing old or dis-

illusioned feels that tightening hand upon the pleasure of mere existence, believes that it is peculiar to himself, and believing that, charges the feeling of indifference to laziness.

This weariness with life comes usually between thirty-five and forty years of age. Through childhood and youth each person feels without thinking of it the exhilaration of physical development. Mere physical enlargement contributes the required height, weight, stature, and strength to cope successively and successfully with whole series of obstacles and to perform with surer triumph of vigor constantly increasingly difficult feats of strength and skill.

Adolescence follows childhood with its perfect riot of new powers due both to growth and development. Along with the high tide of new impulses, nature mercifully and gallantly furnishes also the new powers to carry out the new ambitions. The teens are scarcely over when the youth is launched upon the enterprises of life, all glowing with their novelty, their seriousness, and their promise. Through the

twenties and well into, if not through the thirties, both the novelty and the initial momentum of such enterprises last. Many of the early promises of life come true. Much of the freshness remains to give zest to pleasures. Hope still lights the future and powers still increase.

But surely as the hand of time there comes that level of growth which marks the plateau of life. Novelty is finally swallowed up in monotony. Life settles down to a more or less humdrum existence. Disillusionment tarnishes the sheen of new promises. The exhilaration of increasing strength, physical or mental, wanes and dies. The brilliant hues of life turn somber; the music of joyous strength dies out; the pleasures of life burn low. Yet old age is too far away to account for this sudden darkening by calling it the sunset of life. It seems as if some accidental cloud had come over the sun and turned a bright and promising day into a somber one, low-hung with deadening clouds. One cannot help recalling the words of the poet thirty-seven years old:

My life is in the yellow leaf,
The fruits and flowers of love are gone,
The worm, the canker and the grief,
Are mine alone!

The cure for such a state? Herein lies even more danger than the state itself. Ten thousand suicides a year in America point to one way out. But the cures most sought for, usually in ignorance, be it said for poor human nature, are narcotics and new excitements, the one to deaden, the other to make alive again. The first are sought chiefly by men who are compelled to stick to the treadmill of work; the latter by women who fall into the error of thinking that somehow fate has cheated them out of their rightful inheritance of a permanently thrilling romance. For these errors, our schools for their neglect, and our fiction and our stage for their false suggestions, are responsible.

The first ingredient of the cure is the truth. That should reveal to every one the perfect naturalness of such an experience. It is primarily due to a slackening of the organic functions. While hardly the

approach of old age, it is nevertheless the passing of youth. It is that August period of existence when spring has gone and when autumn with its Indian summer, its ripe, red sunsets, its mellowing and hazy days, with all their fruitage of field and orchard beautified by the brilliant foliage of the forest, are still in the future. It is harder even for most men to bear than that other intermediate state when childhood changes to manhood, the voice wavers and breaks, and youth is neither man nor boy.

Knowing that the experience is common to mankind may mitigate the extremity of suffering but it will not cure the disease, unless most sternly the temptation to take refuge in idleness is rebuked and overcome. *For nothing will help but work.* The work is the rebuilding of life. The habits of work, or of other pleasure-giving activities which were initiated by mere youthful impulse blindly following the crowd according to the conventions of the day, and which now are found to be empty of pleasure-giving power, must be remade or reinvested with new meanings. Youth took its thoughtless

way under the influence of mere instincts—whose validity as guide, just because they were blind, and for no other reason, was not for a moment questioned—and found itself in harmony with the conventions because they were built upon such instincts. The middle-aged man and woman must sit down like genuine rational creatures and plan out a life with deliberation and foresight.

A concrete illustration may be more illuminating here than reams of description. A woman who had been reared in comfort, sent to a private school, married to a man of her own station and surrounded in her own beautiful home by three children, found herself one day confronted with the strange stalking specter of staleness, *tedium vitæ*. Life had had its usual disillusionments. Youth's promises had been only half kept. The husband was immersed in his business; the girls and boy were growing up; old friends had drifted far away to other moorings in quiet waters; music and dancing had long been neglected and social affairs had palled and lost their brilliancy and meaning.

Club life was not open to her by reason of her situation. Charitable work or social uplift had no appeal. But fortunately she had two daughters in a college near enough for the girls to live at home. Their progress naturally claimed much of the mother's attention. She had in her own youth coveted more learning than she had ever acquired and had secretly cherished some ambitions to take up a literary career which had been smothered in the choke-damp atmosphere of her conventional bringing-up.

These fragments she picked up and pieced together into a new life. She entered the university classes in literature; studied her lessons, wrote her papers, read her authors, and entered upon that exploration of the wide fields of literature which her youth craved but had been denied. She neglected no duties. She simply added new duties to the old. She worked. That was her mode of salvation; and to-day she is happy not only in the treasures of the classics which she has garnered for her own satisfaction, but also in the new contacts with her own children, and with the new lists of

acquaintances made amongst both the young and old. The usual asperities of age against the younger set have been softened, and a better estimate of the vagaries of her own daughters in this new age has come to mellow her judgment of their shocking departures from the approved patterns of conduct laid down by a past generation.

This exact procedure may not be open to every one. But its underlying principles are general and can be applied to the reconstruction of a threadbare existence. Life must be turned inside out. The other side must be looked upon. The intellect and not so much the heart must henceforth determine courses of action. The immediate surroundings with all its small duties, as well as the great universe, must be taken into view. Youthful prodigality with time, which treats its years as endless, must be discarded for a serious frugality of the years left. Due preparation must be made for the winter time of life when capacities for sensuous pleasures evaporate, coveted positions and possessions turn to dross of fu-

tility, and nothing but the mind and conscience remain active.

In all this there is little that demands a radical change in any one's mode of living. The change is on the inside not the outside. A man may go right on with his business. He may take the usual 8:15 train, read his paper, go through the routine of the day, lunch, go home again at night, engage in his ordinary exercises and amusements. These all may be dull and stupid to him. But their very access of stupidity may be for him the point of departure to a new plane of existence. Why are they stupid? What has come over them? What has changed? These are questions which engage the intellect, that power of the average man which earliest degenerates into relative dormancy. To arouse that faculty into even the yawning stage of wakefulness may give new zest to life. At any rate it is the sure way out of despondency.

Once the question "Why?" is seriously asked, its answer will open a new world. Where it will lead no one can tell. For the universe is one great, staring, billboard

writ large all over with that portentous question mark. Apply it to pleasure. Why do some men find permanent pleasure and others do not? That suggests the possibility that there may be differences in pleasures. The old division into sensuous, intellectual and moral pleasures will then start up out of their fossil beds with a sudden resurrection of vitality. Pleasures of the senses are seen to be temporary, depending upon place and time, and having in them their own destruction. Eating and drinking, and all other such expedients speedily bring a surfeit. They cloy and sicken. Time takes away the memory of their enjoyment and leaves the bitterest regrets for the impossibility of their return.

But intellectual pleasures are different. Upon first acquaintance they possess a forbidding aspect that drives most people of blunted insight into life and its problems, away from them and into the arms of deceitful, sensuous pleasures. Study is hard. Collision with a new idea gives a distinct shock. Thinking to most people is distasteful. In some societies it is shunned.

Knowledge is sneered at as being worth nothing because it is not immediately convertible into the coin of the realm, or because it cannot ornament the vapidity of social intercourse. Only to the initiated is it plain that study yields an enormous dividend on the investment. All this makes any intellectual effort wholly futile to the average young man who is hopelessly blind to the temporariness of instincts as a source of happiness. Only when life's middle-aged staleness dries up the springs of emotion and a man finds that the cup is empty of satisfaction, will he begin to know life as it is, and long to recover what youth threw away.

Middle-aged reflection may also reveal the vitality of moral pleasures. What in youth appeared to be but interfering and futile duties, entirely separate from his business of life, can remain. But determined reflection can lead a man into a new and innervating sense of the splendid morality of the whole world. Let him ask himself why no permanent delight comes from money? Or from any material posses-

sion? Or from power? Or from fame? He may find that they do not give him happiness because he sees no use for them. Money unspent is dross; spent, is gone; power unused is useless; used for self, it is worse than useless. Only as money, power, fame and all else incident to business are used for the service of others will they yield up the pressed-out wine of happiness to their possessor. Joy in joy of others is an endless joy. To it there is no limit set by time or space. A good deed done never wears out; like gold, it burnishes with wear and the years leave its glow untarnished. So is the world constituted and this is the moral law. By laying new values upon good deeds and by devotion to good works, the weary life may be rebuilt into something unfadingly new and splendid.

A great captain of industry whose life marvelously exemplifies the ability of a man to keep going onward and upward and to find in his own business new sources of increasing happiness and inspiration to work, is quoted as saying that he cares nothing for money. Yet he makes millions of dol-

lars annually. But it is not the money that inspires his efforts. Nobody could hire him. What would they offer? What salary would command his services? The idea only has to be broached to be rendered ridiculous. What does lead him on and on is the thought of more factories with more men at work who through their labor bring comfort and happiness to thousands of homes wherein dwell happy families of men, women and children. This great and increasing throng of human beings, with all their calls upon the heart of this man, is what he envisages and what keeps him unwearied and extraordinarily happy in his continued application to his business. Moral duty in this supreme sense of consciously serving mankind in the place where circumstances have placed a man is the final arbiter of happiness. It knows no weariness with life. It feels only the joy of service.

To those who have been taught to assign to any indisposition to work the one cause of laziness, let the message of hope come clear and strong. The feeling of indolence

is merely the dying out of the usual incentives to effort. They are instinctive—the animal drive of blind forces, like lust for food and sex, and greed for money or power. Youth feels them and only them, and yields to them and finds them full of zest and satisfaction. Their natural and inevitable decay leaves life as futile as an empty tomb. Natural incentive gone, the sufferer suspects himself of laziness, or worse.

Chapter VII

Partial Idleness

FOR many years I have watched with interest two men whom I knew intimately as boys growing up in a country village inhabited chiefly by diligent foreigners who knew manual labor as the only road to that monetary success they all coveted. The two boys were about the same age, very similar in physical, intellectual and moral endowments and looked so much alike that some people could hardly tell them apart.

But their habits of life were widely divergent. The younger boy was active in outdoor occupations. He loved horses and learned early to ride and drive well. He took readily to farming and could plow when he was too young to turn the plow at the end of a furrow. In school he was bright enough but never applied himself

with sufficient interest to make any remarkable record. He left school at fourteen and went to work first at a trade, and later entered into business for himself. To-day he confesses that brain-work is harder than hand-work.

The older boy was strong and healthy, played more games than did the other, detested farming in all its phases and with it all manual labor except that which required some skill, and spent most of his spare time reading with that omnivorousness and avidity peculiar to country boys with an intellectual interest and few books. As a result he early acquired a reputation for inveterate laziness. He was contrasted with the other ready, active boy who loved "work." His idleness was considered disgraceful, and especially shameful since his mother was a widow. The fact that he generally earned in the course of a year as much money as other boys was overlooked. Only his long days of physical idleness spent in silent reading were observed and remarked upon with many a premonitory shake of the head and a hope-

fully melancholy prediction of some bad end.

The two boys are now men in middle life. Both have done well. The younger is a successful business man who has amassed a fortune by hard application. The other broke away from his little town, worked his way through college, became a professor, then a college administrator and is now a college president.

However, if any one goes back to that little village and talks to the older inhabitants about those two boys, he will receive a glowing account of the younger lad of wonderful energy, who is now in business for himself and rich, but only a significant shaking of the head about the other one who "was lazy and never did amount to much—is a teacher or professor or something like that away off somewhere." And the wiseacres are quite satisfied with the essential justness of a universe which rewards diligence and labor with material success and punishes idleness and laziness with school-teaching and such kindred torments!

But I have often wondered at the contumely which the one boy had to suffer in his boyhood and youth, and what effect it had upon him. I suppose he smiles now about it, but at the time he was going through that period of his life, he was not only pained uselessly but also at times bewildered, and possibly dismayed, by the charge of laziness. Fortunately for him, the ridiculous charge did not swerve him from his path of learning, or deter him from entering that profession for which he was fitted and in which he has spent both a useful and a happy life.

This false charge of laziness still retains its tenacious foothold in some communities. It not only forms the theme of many modern works of fiction, like "Tillie, the Mennonite Maid," but takes on a real social significance by inveighing ruthlessly against the "white-shirt brigade" and the "college community" groups who are somehow suspected of shirking the labor which dignifies and ennobles man by associating itself with overalls and dirt. All of the class antagonism displayed toward the brain worker is not

due merely to envy of his supposedly higher position, and in these days certainly not due to his better pay. The sense, and more or less open expression, of superior righteousness felt and exhibited by the man who works with his hands over one who merely turns the pages of a book or pushes a gliding pen over wastes of smooth paper indicates that some sort of moral opprobrium is attached to the bookish shirker of life's sterner duties. A member of the learned profession, and especially the student of the recluse type, is always darkly suspected by the laboring classes of being secretly moved in his avoidance of "work" by laziness.

That which gives point and barb to the prejudice is found in the moral condemnation attached to the "laziness" aroused against any one to whom that epithet is applied. To remedy to some extent the class antagonism based upon this false foundation, it is necessary to go back to individuals and endeavor there to refute the charge of laziness whenever it is unjustly lodged against a boy or girl devoted

by superior intellectual endowments to reading and study.

The immediate lesson to be drawn from the above illustration is the truth that some forms of inactivity in childhood are entirely natural. Little people, like grown-ups, follow their inclinations and specialize in the things they like. The only true diagnosis of laziness possible is one made after a complete survey of any child's whole range of activities. Some kinds of inaction are highly significant; some of no vital importance whatever. In general, neglect of those duties imposed upon children by adults or by circumstances reveals but little as to the later man's attitudes toward work. In the very nature of the case, a healthy and robust boy will attempt to avoid as many unpleasant duties as he can, and shirk the rest as far as he can. Such conduct may not possibly be passed over lightly, but it should never be made the sole and only basis for the conclusion that indolence is the root of the neglect. There are forms of idleness perfectly natural to *all* developing boys and girls; particular

forms of idleness almost inevitable to *some* boys and girls of peculiar temperament, or inborn dispositions; and still other forms due to abnormal causes or diseases. To distinguish between these various forms is the first duty of a scientific student of children, and of any human being claiming a character for fairness and justice.

Since a child will generally tend to evade duties imposed upon him from above, his true character as a worker must be discovered in that realm of activities which children spontaneously choose for themselves. That realm, startling as it may seem to people who have so long associated play with the essence of idleness, is the field of play. Herein the true criterion of children's indolence must be sought. If a child does not play, it is serious. If he neglects everything else and plays with zest and vehemence, he is quite normal for the present and promising for the future. This may be contrary to much popular opinion, but that opinion has been developed more by past theological teaching than by the modern, open-minded observation of chil-

dren, actuated by a desire for their best good in the long run.

Yet this popular notion that play is idleness is not altogether without foundation in human nature and the organization of society. In it there is a modicum of truth. That truth is the same with that which counts a man who does nothing more than satisfy his lowest vegetable and animal desires a typical sluggard. The insinuation brings to the surface the tacit assumption that any one must give out of his store of energy something more than the amount which will barely satisfy his own wants. Work has in it the conception of a surplusage of activity over and above the internal, organic functions of the vital organs, and over and above that required for satisfying inborn instincts alone.

Play is looked upon askance by the many who sense in it a mere selfish satisfaction of an instinctive desire and do not see beyond that any product for the good of others. Part of that assumption is true. Play is instinctive; it is an activity answering the call of deep-seated and inborn de-

sires; it does first of all satisfy these desires in the player. But it goes much further and contains within itself and in its corresponding activities whole realms of educational and moral values which ultimately rebound in abundant harvest to society as a whole.

Besides the values above enumerated, play has for purposes of discovering real laziness a peculiar quality. It is an answer to an instinctive urge. That is fundamental in it. If that impulse is lacking or deficient, then surely something very fundamental is wrong with the child. How wrong can be guessed by observing how a sick child will give up its play last, and a convalescent child will take up its play first; how children released from factories after a hard day of enervating toil will break into spontaneous and spasmodic play on the street going home; and how the same boys will congregate at night under electric lights in parks or attend gymnasia and playgrounds and pursue their games with spirit and vigor. Play represents the expression of primitive impulses, of deep-seated and

powerful motives, of demands that can tap energy in nervous and muscular systems when these are too fatigued for any other kind of activity whatever.

If, then, a child does not play when opportunity offers, it is highly significant for both his present and future. If no cause for such idleness appears either in his environment, or in his own physical condition, then there is sound basis for suspicion that it arises from some mental defect. This defect may be inherited imbecility, or it may be laziness in the true sense. In the first case it is incurable; in the second event it may be a passing stage in the development of the boy or girl and so will cure itself; or it may be due to habits of seclusion, or shyness, or self-consciousness, all of which can be overcome by wise inculcation of right habits.

Play has another and important value in this connection. It is not only a diagnostic characteristic for discovering laziness, but it also furnishes one of the most efficacious methods of overcoming laziness. It does this by virtue of its great power to

initiate action. Allow a child to see others playing and before long, no matter what the contrary inhibitory factors may be, he is insensibly but surely drawn into the flood of their game, and before long finds himself at the very vortex of their excited and self-forgetful struggles. When all inducements to work fail, mere exposure to play may work the miracle of turning indolence into intense activity.

For play is intense. True there are listless games, easy and careful of expenditure of muscular force, but these are not the games of young people. Checkers, chess and many other indoor games, and croquet and a few other outdoor games are followed mainly as exercises in relaxation by older people rather than by young people. It may be stated without hesitancy to those who have experienced it that play has the power in itself to tap energy as much as any other activity in which man enters, being on a par with fighting and hunting in that respect.

To the spectator looking on, this phase is often missed. He is prone to think that

the game has no more power to call out the deepest reserves of the players than it has for him. In that he is wholly mistaken. Play is an incomparable character-maker, first, because it reveals to the players themselves the resources hidden within themselves; and secondly, because it teaches by joyous experience never forgettable the intoxicating exhilaration of action.

While all this may be admitted by those who believe in work, still it is suspected that play must confess to that fatal defect of caprice in effort. The player can quit when he desires. At least it seems so to the unitiated observer. But not to any one who ever played. He knows from hard and hardening experience that in many forms of individual play, and in most games, the player cannot, any more than a hired laborer, quit when he feels like it. What a visitation of wrath would fall upon a football man if he suddenly sat down in the crisis of a game and gave as his reason his terrible weariness! What ostracism and disgrace would follow such a proceeding! That most terrible of all epithets to a young

man or boy, "Yellow!" would make him writhe forever afterward. What boy, too, could quit because he feels like it when he has climbed through some mysterious but uncontrollable urge up the smooth trunk of a tree? Or the face of a cliff? Or stop swimming in the middle of the stream? Or skating over the thin ice on which his daring has led him? Or instantly be translated from the mountainside where he has hiked, to the warm and comfortable fireside of his home?

Play not only initiates action with a peculiar power, not only reaches back into the muscle and nerve cells and drags out the last modicum of reserve energy there, but it exacts the most rigid and persistent adherence to a program once launched. It was no figure of speech which the "Iron" Duke uttered when he said after the battle of Waterloo on which he devoutly prayed that either Blücher or night would come, that he won that great day for a racial supremacy on the playground of Eton. The residuum of iron precipitate which gave him his popular title remained from the days

when play held him, like Prometheus, cliff-bound, to the contest which he had entered and could not quit till it was played through.

To those who believe with good old Doctor Rush, who said a century ago approvingly that the Methodists in their college in Maryland had rightfully excluded all forms of play and that the Moravians at Bethlehem gave their children all needed physical exercise through the simpler forms of manual labor, such a view of play as a maker of diligence may seem astonishing. The influence of a false ethics, of an adult-made theology, of a closer Puritanism still lingers where the light of the newer child study has not yet penetrated. In those twilight corners, the old synonyms—idleness and play—still are linked together by the common bond of laziness. Those who obscure the differences between the realities by overlooking the distinctions between the words and their ideas naturally are the ones also who do not make distinctions between work and drudgery. For them no difference exists.

It might be horrifying to them to be told that they never have worked or they would understand play. They have merely drudged. The performance of an activity for the pleasure that comes from the performance of the activity itself is for many an unknown pleasure. Forced action and relaxation are the only two experiences they know. That a great, impassioned and exhilarating realm of human experience lies all unexplored and all unknown immediately before them is too astounding a statement to be believed. Yet it is there. To be introduced into it is the supremest joy of living. The doorway to it is play. When no known force can drive a person out of his indolence he may be tempted through that doorway into work.

In connection with the insistence upon the importance of the play-activity in the life of a child, we must not overlook one or two perfectly natural causes for finding exceptions to the rule. The first most common one is the perfectly natural disposition of girls to quiet down at the beginning of their teens. Their harum-scarum

days, when they partook of much tomboy nature, are done. They show a distinct tendency to statuesque postures and movements of grace. The fashions of a period, to which girls are such abject slaves, may for a time obscure these natural tendencies, but they are there, imbedded in the very fiber of the girl's nature and will in the long run exert themselves.

About the same period of life some boys enter upon a period of inactivity without any apparent cause for it. It is really due to their surprising growth in stature. All students of adolescence are aware of the fact that children grow in weight and height spasmodically and not evenly. At the age of puberty, about the age of fourteen or fifteen years, boys especially shoot up at an amazing rate. Cases are on record which show that boys sometimes increase their stature nine inches in one year. It is for them the gangling period; arms and legs elongate, muscles stretch and thin out in stretching. The chubbiness of childhood bewailingly loses itself in the thinness and scragginess of youth. All the bodily energy

a boy seems to possess goes into pushing him up into the air.

As a result of this physiological condition, of which he is wholly blameless, a general lassitude creeps over the erstwhile energetic youngster. He lacks his former vim. He would rather sit still than move and when he does move it is with a listless, lagging gait that irritates beyond endurance any one who walks or works with him, or sends him on an errand or sets him to doing chores. Naturally the irritation breaks out in the form of the ubiquitous "lazy" charge.

Such a condemnation is dangerous. Sometimes, though not often, it may urge a boy, and more probably a girl, to overdo at times when all the energy possible should be conserved for fortifying the constitution against the inroads of disease when it is peculiarly liable to certain attacks. This may not be often the danger. More often the charge may be admitted by the culprit and he will plead "Guilty!" and then endeavor to live up to the charge. The habit of idleness may then become a lifelong habit.

Very recently, in an interview with a high-school girl regarding her character traits, she said half defiantly, "My teacher says I'm just lazy!" The mingled emotions revealed in that statement and the manner in which it was made were pathetic. To the teacher "laziness" meant little, possibly nothing, probably a vague sort of expression when the mind was too tired to think clearly. To the girl it meant an inexplicable inability ever to apply herself so as to amount to anything in life in school or out. A "lazy student" she might survive, but a "lazy housekeeper" threatened her inmost ambitions. The term, for her, therefore, assumed portentous proportions and threw up toward the zenith of her arching future a terrible cloud.

It should have been easy for the teacher to have pointed out to the girl that she did not like the application required by study because her body was using most of its energy in building itself up in new ways. The languor of youth should not be mistaken for the habit of inaction. The young lady might have been urged on that basis

to conserve her strength against dissipation in late hours and too many amusements and use it on her studies. She was interested in herself, in her future, in making the best of it. Sympathetic and discriminating treatment is what she needed.

Chapter VIII

Mental Laziness

ONE of the commonest forms of laziness so called is aversion to mental activity. This shows itself most patently in schools, and especially amongst boys. Whenever there is no obtrusive cause in evidence in a pupil who does not get his lessons, the easiest and quickest disposal of the failure is to brand it "laziness" and follow this erroneous diagnosis with applications to the pupil's will. The great Doctor Johnson, maker of the first English dictionary and a man of prodigious learning, set his mistaken indorsement upon this mode of remedy when he said that "his teacher once whipped him very hard; and without that he would probably never have learned much", though it was evident that nobody on earth, and practically no obstacle, could have prevented that

supremely active mind of his from absorbing knowledge as a merchant absorbs wealth. Immured in a dungeon, such an eager mind will find ways and means as miraculous as those of the bishop in Monte Cristo, who made ingenious astronomical calculations and kept a journal written on his linen shirt with fishbones dipped in his own blood.

Opposite to these naturally endowed souls, it must not be forgotten that another army of unfortunates come into the world without any, or with very limited powers of learning anything. They form the feeble-minded class in our population. All their mental processes are slow; sometimes the higher processes are wholly absent. Everything they do learn, they learn slowly; some things they never can learn. These feeble-minded, especially the highest class, the morons, so called from the Greek word for "fool", bear no distinguishing marks of their mental defect and are therefore cruelly blamed for their inborn backwardness and stupidity. Happily methods and clinics are constantly being multiplied

whereby the public is being informed about these child minds, and while they never can be cured, they are being saved much needless suffering by being gathered together into institutions where with kindred spirits, they do not suffer from comparison with the normal children, but build up their care-free worlds in happiness and contentment.

The usual dislike of boys for study is perfectly natural. In all my experience with scholars and in all of my reading, I have never found a man or woman who *enjoyed study*. Many there are who prefer it to other forms of labor; many more endure its pains for the sake of the joy of learning or the prospective possession of knowledge; multitudes there are who endure study with fortitude; but to put it in the blunt assertion of one of the most learned men I ever knew, "He who says he enjoys study lies!" So the real study of books is hard, repellent, hateful.

Being so, the natural, red-blooded boy will not like it. Being a natural boy he will strive to avoid what he does not like.

In the presence of books he will be idle, and therefore charged with laziness, though on the playground, or in the woods, he may be one of the most active beings alive.

Many reasons for this very common dislike for study might be found. The first one is the obvious law that *what people have done much they like much to do; and what they have done little they like little to do.* Likewise, *what the race has not done very long is hard for the individuals of the race to do.* In the case of study this more or less strong aversion arises from the anatomical structure of the brain. That part of the brain which is concerned with study is the frontal lobes, lying immediately behind the forehead. This is the seat of thinking, reasoning, meditating, reflecting. The more marked its development, usually the greater is the mental capacity accompanying it.

Being the most recent development in man, it follows the law of new structures, and functions with more difficulty than the ancient and primitive organs which have thousands—or millions—of years of training back of them. For long millenniums

after man came upon the scene of action, he had small use for anything more than his most rudimentary thinking powers. Probably he has made more progress in the last hundred and fifty years than in all the one hundred and fifty thousand years before that.

How startlingly recent the ideal of universal book-learning is may be guessed from the fact that in some very late stages of European civilization prevalent social ideals offered powerful motives for eschewing books and tasks. As late as the sixteenth century in highly cultured England and on the continent of Europe, "plaienge att weapons" formed the necessary and only indispensable part of a young man's education. The prevailing disposition is well expressed by a gentleman in the time of Henry VIII who upon hearing letters praised, purged himself of his righteous bile in this true country-gentleman manner:

"I swear I'd rather that my son should hang than learn letters. For it becomes the sons of gentlemen to blow the horn nicely, to hunt skillfully, and elegantly to

carry and train a hawk. But the study of letters should be left to the sons of rustics."

How radically have times and ideals changed since that day! Yet this knowledge of the comparatively recent low estimate of the now most cherished learning may aid us in gauging more accurately the causes of young people's idleness in the face of bookishness. For ideals themselves linger long; and the innate dispositions which one time made those ideals the practical maxims of great classes of society linger in youths long after the ideals themselves have been discarded by older and more experienced people. Ancient heredity, present anatomical organization, and old ideals all conspire to drive boys and girls from study. It is not laziness that does it.

Another force operating constantly and everywhere has conspired with brain anatomy to make study objectionable to normal beings. That is the power of association. We all know that every experience is in some measure agreeable or disagreeable. Likewise we know that we all like to do whatever brings agreeable feelings.

We all want to eat more of that which tastes good, draw nearer on a chilly day to a crackling fire, continue beyond bedtime the fascinating story that stirs our emotions. What is equally true is the fact that these feelings can be transferred from one activity to another, or from one part of a complex action to another part. For example, if a person has his toe shocked with electricity at the same time that a light flashes into his open eyes, his foot jerks and the pupils of his eyes contract. If this double stimulation is repeated simultaneously many times, the pupil of the eye will later contract when the toe is shocked even though no light is presented to the eye. The two stimuli, shock and light, have been associated together so many times that when one occurs it is enough to cause both reactions.

The same law holds for the transference of feelings. If a task like study is persistently associated with all kinds of the most disagreeable, distressing and painful feelings, though none of them belong necessarily to study, they will finally spread themselves like a prairie fire, over to study itself, and

the thought of the task will fatally arouse a host of more or less vague feelings of dislike.

Paradoxical as it may at first sight appear, the schools themselves have been most instrumental in bringing about this strange and hurtful association of study and distress. Great indeed has been the progress in recent years away from such associations, and gratifying, too, is the direction in which all modern study is moving. But the partial reform of a few years cannot eradicate all the associations of the past, and too many schools still partake, at least in a small part, of the spirit of the fifteenth-century school described by Agricola, a great teacher, when he said:

"A school is committed unto me. That is a difficult and a vexatious thing. A school is like a prison in which there are blows, tears and groans without end. If there is anything with a contrary name it is a school. The Greeks named it *schola*, that is leisure; the Latins *ludus literarius*, literary play; but there is nothing farther from leisure than the school; nothing harder and more opposed to play. More correctly

did it receive from Aristophenes the name *phrontizerion*, that is, place of care."

Not only the immediate pains of the suffering little people should claim our attention, but also the fundamental destructive policy of associating study with psychological experiences which will eventually destroy all taste for study. The most ignorant mother who associates in her baby's nervous system forbidden articles with wry faces and expressions of "nastiness" understands the principle involved.

The efficacy of the process is probably best illustrated by its power to taint the natural sources of pleasure in life and to turn a young person to study itself for solace and comfort. Roger Ascham in his "Schoolmaster", published in 1570, tells of a visit he once made to the young Lady Jane Gray whom he found reading Plato's "Phædo" in Greek. Upon his asking the reason for her preference for study to the amusements of a ducal court, for which many people would give literally their souls, Lady Jane tells him they are but "a shadow to the pleasure" that she found in Plato.

"And how came you, madame," further inquires the old schoolmaster, "to this deep knowledge of pleasure?" "I will tell you," replied the young noblewoman, "one of the greatest benefits that ever God gave to me, is, that he sent me so sharp and severe parents and so gentle a schoolmaster.

"For when I am in the presence of either father or mother, whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand or go, eat, drink, be merry or be sad, be sewing, playing, dancing or doing anything else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure and number, even so perfectly, as God made the world; or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently, sometimes with pinches, nibs, and bobs, and other ways I shall not name, for the honor I bear them, so without measure misordered, that I think myself in hell, till time come that I must go to Mr. Elmer; who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing while I am with him.

"And when I am called from him, I fall to weeping, because whatsoever I do else

but learning is full of grief, trouble, fear, and whole misliking to me. And thus my book hath been so much my pleasure and bringeth to me daily more pleasure and more, that in respect to it, all other pleasures, in very deed, be but trifles and troubles unto me."

Surely a method which could win a young lady born in a duke's home in a period anything but studious, away from the pleasures of her world to the delights of Greek learning must be efficacious enough to win boys and girls to study in this age of education. The method is the homely one of making study a happy occupation by conferring upon it the accessories of praise instead of nagging and punishments.

The same law operates also in another way. Man from his earliest life has exercised certain functions which have concerned vitally the preservation of his life and well-being. These acts are indissolubly bound up with pleasant feelings. They concern food-getting, mating, and religious exercises. They appear in our modern boys and girls in the form of inborn interests which break out early in play and games,

and later in dancing, religious worship refined and ennobled by revelation and practice, and in courtship, and in that modified form of hunting called "making a living."

The more direct the method of securing the satisfaction of any one of these instincts the more eagerly and devotedly will the inheritor of such impulses express them. Thousands of years of pleasurable gratification has accompanied their expression, and each newborn babe is endowed with myriads of latent associations made in the past between certain forms of action and most satisfying results. Upon the exercise of such activities in response to inborn desires, the same old anticipated agreeable associations are incipiently aroused and the activity is immediately flooded with a full tide of feeling that feeds the activity itself into fiercer life as oil feeds flames.

Therefore, we would expect that young people will naturally take to certain primitive forms of activity, like play in which the hunting and fighting instincts are satisfied; and dancing in which the court-

ship and religious interests both are concerned; and in the actual work of making a living which has been for ages the most important quest of mankind. These performances carry on their very faces a fascination too obvious to be accounted for by the participants. "Of course they are interesting! Everybody does it." That, to young people, is a sufficient ground of justification for their ardent pursuit of pleasurable occupations. Bearing as these activities do their own credentials of favorable attention, they must be made the vehicles for transporting the interest which they have accumulated through centuries over to the studies which we want boys and girls to follow.

The right process is not hard to discover. John Locke, the philosopher and teacher of Lord Shaftesbury, long ago remarked that in teaching, "The chief art is to make all that children have to do sport and play." To accomplish this the boy himself must first be studied. His dominating interest must be discovered. His studies must then take their application and to some extent

their content also from his interests. This may require some patience and energy on the part of his teacher and parents, but, since these mentors are in no wise open to the charge of laziness themselves, they will be happy to do what is required for the cherished welfare of the boy.

No radical change is usually necessary in the curriculum or mode of teaching. A little more skill in relating the subjects taught to the boy's interests is frequently all that is needed. This demands no more than a modicum of imagination on the part of the teacher with willing coöperation from the boy's parents. A few examples will make clear the principle and offer suggestions which may be worked out in detail.

The first instance indicates how the smallest modicum of imagination on the part of an instructor may enliven the ordinary recitation in the schoolroom. A class of boys and girls were reciting about the geography of Labrador. "James, what is fishing?" came a question in stereotyped form and tone from the lady in charge.

To Jimmie thus addressed, this question

awakened the first keen gleam of interest and sense that he had been able to perceive in the useless study of that barren country lying away off nowhere. All excitement, he arose to the occasion and began, "First, you get a hook; then a line, then—"

"Sit down!" interrupted the teacher; and turning to the next boy she said severely, "John, what is fishing?"

Johnny, equally enlivened by the nature of the question and the nearness of it to his vital interest, and thinking that Jimmy had failed in not beginning far enough back in the piscatorial process, thought to show his expert knowledge of the art by saying, "First, you git a worm—"

"Sit down!" almost shouted the horrified schoolmistress to whom a worm was an abomination of desolation; and turning next to Mary she repeated, "What is fishing?"

Mary arose and, with the primness of the two pigtails hanging down her back, gave the conventional answer, "Fishing is the chief occupation of the Province!"

"Correct!" answered the teacher in her sweetest tone, gazing upon the two abashed

young barbarians who were going through their fishing stage of civilization.

Aside from the futility of expecting any pupil to see the relationship between such a question and the background that demanded such an answer, lies the baffling ignorance of such a teacher about those boy interests which form the basis of their learning processes. One sympathetic moment from that teacher might have made those average boys deep students of geography.

Another instance indicates the natural interest of a child in making a living and in animals which has been nourished at home by the occupation of his father. A certain boy was seemingly never able to get his arithmetic in school. Daily he made his offering of cabalistic signs to the unknown god and received back his paper criss-crossed with rejections, the cause of which remained as unfathomable and as arbitrary to him as the swing of the gods from one side to the other of the Trojan battlers.

But one day, to the amazement of his teacher, all his problems were correct. The

schoolmistress, old and cynical, thought she knew why. He had copied them from somewhere. But being wise, she waited till next day. As expected, his problems were all wrong. Still she waited. The third day brought the usual results,—problems all wrong. Then she spoke her mind. "Johnny, tell me, why did you get your number work all correct last Tuesday, and now on Wednesday and Thursday it is all wrong as usual. What is the reason for it?"

"Aw, they was horse problems!" Johnny replied.

"Horse problems?" repeated the mystified teacher, "What in the world do you mean?"

"Why, they was all about drayin' and boxes, and barrels, and how much it cost."

Then light began to dawn upon the teacher, whose mind had never gone beyond formal arithmetic, and she remembered that on Tuesday a gleam of meaning and interest had been shot through the arithmetic lesson by throwing the content of the lesson into the form of concrete

problems on drayage, apparently for the benefit of that large number of boys who would one day grow up and be truck-drivers. Then, too, the teacher remembered that she vaguely had heard Johnny's father was a drayman. Consequently all his life at home, Johnny had heard problems in the cost of hauling talked about in his family with that vital interest concerned with getting a living, buying a new suit, or Christmas toys, until nearly all his life circled about that center of what it costs to haul a box of a certain weight so many squares at so much per pound.

Endless illustrations like these might be drawn from the actual life of the schoolroom, but these will be enough to illustrate the principle and the ease of its application without any radical changes in present schoolroom methods. Great progress in this direction has already been made. The discerning teacher does not annihilate a boy who does not study with the approbrious term "lazy", but she studies him most carefully to find if he plays well and vigorously; if he has any hobbies, like

collecting; if he keeps pets, like rabbits, pigeons, or a dog; if he helps his father in his business, or engages voluntarily in any activity outside of the detested class-room. Once learning that a boy does show energetic application to some form of vocation or avocation, she goes further to discover the motive that prompts such application and then finds how that motive in that boy's life can be best satisfied by the study of books and the learning that comes from them.

Such an attitude of course necessitates on the part of parents, teachers and society a great reversal from the last-century attitude. But so long as statistics bombard us with the truth that our criminals are increasing faster than our population and especially amongst our youths, we must be ready to change from the older methods of transforming boys and girls into citizens of the Republic. Remembering how closely idleness and crime are associated in the lives of men and women, we will admit the essential demand made upon us by the inexorable exigencies of the whole situation

and undertake to recognize more practically the calls of the instincts we ourselves as parents have transmitted to our children—calls for a more sensible and sympathetic fitting together of child natures and the tasks to be done. We might learn from Cinderella the futility of cutting off heels and cutting off toes in order to fit our children into conventional molds.

In addition to these natural appeals, artificial stimulations may be brought into action. In an age when young people count the accumulation of money the chief mark of success, it is illuminating to state the case from that point of view. The truth sometimes strikes upon a youngster's ear like a revelation. He has been so long in the habit of associating education with his teachers, who stand in his mind with that professional poverty which, quite agreeable to the law of association, is connected in his mind with education itself.

The figures given in 1917 in the United States Federal Bureau of Education Bulletin Number 22, on "The Money Value of Education," show that a college course and

all it entails, is worth on an average about forty thousand dollars. In other words, a college graduate in this country on the average makes two thousand dollars more a year than a man without an education. The high-school graduate's learning is worth, on the same basis, eighteen thousand five hundred dollars. These figures summarily dispose of the mistaken notion that education is a purely theoretical acquisition, conveying perhaps to its wearer the adornment of a hypothetical culture, but hardly worth the application it demands for giving any solid and practical advantage in life. It gives both, and requires the sacrifice of neither one for the other.

The same Bulletin also points out the inspiring advantages of study. Renown follows faithfully in its train. "Who's Who" is a volume containing the names of men and women who have risen above their fellows in some honorable career of service. Of those listed therein, 5768 are college graduates, 1245 are high-school graduates, 808 are grade-school graduates; and 31 with no schooling. In our civilization it is

almost impossible for native genius no matter how energetic or lucky, unassisted by mental training, to attain to renown.

The distribution of public offices is not a matter of mere chance. Education shows a high correlation with the attainment of such honors also. Of our presidents fifty-five per cent were college graduates; of our vice presidents fifty-four per cent; and of our congressmen thirty-six per cent; of our secretaries of state, sixty-two per cent; and in a similar manner we might go on through the list of public offices in the gift of the franchises of our people or in the power of appointment. Such studies reveal to us the almost startling fact that in a free democracy like ours, new and still fluid in its opportunities, sixty-seven per cent of our leaders are chosen from less than one-half of one per cent of our population, and that enormous advantage is due to college education. Were such truths more widely disseminated amongst our young people they might act as incentives to bolster up the indolent wills of young people in their difficult task of study.

Chapter IX

The Plan of Battle

THUS far in this little volume we have been concerned with cases of inaction which have been due to specific and temporary causes. In each case it has been shown either that natural spells of indolence cure themselves, or how abnormal cases can be cured. Now we come to grips with laziness itself, as due both to the divorcement between ideas and action, or laziness as a settled policy of doing nothing more than is necessary to satisfy some of the most elementary and instinctive desires of existence. In either case the outward manifestation is a fixed habit of life in which inaction is at the maximum and action at the minimum. The conquest of such laziness consists in substituting for this state of relative torpidity a state of high and efficient activity

which affords the person himself full measure of self-respect, and society its share of productive labor due from any one of its members, over and above that required by the mere satisfaction of his own wants.

Like all diseases which doctors treat there is a general mode of treatment and a particular modification of this general mode made necessary by the idiosyncracies of each patient. Therefore, we cannot expect that in each and every case a cure will be readily obtained by the literal application of the general principles we will lay down. Common sense, personal skill, some invention are all presupposed in offering general rules for cures.

The validity of the general rules here proposed lies in the fact that they have been derived from a study of human nature. They are not theoretical, but practical. Therefore, in so far as any individual is human, in so far as his nature conforms to that of mankind in general, in so far as he is like other people, the rules apply absolutely and exactly. They need no variation. But in so far as a man is different from

others, and each person differs in some details from others, the rules must be modified to suit the occasion. That modification need not be great and it can be made by common sense. If thus made and faithfully followed the result is inevitable. Human nature is like any other organization operating under natural laws.

With deliberate purpose, so far in this campaign of conquest against laziness and for work, no mention has been made of the "will." That omission is due to two reasons: first, because modern psychologists have for some time disbelieved in the existence of any faculty called the "Will." In view of the pseudo-scientific dissertations, written and spoken, still being supplied to an unsuspecting public, this may seem at first sight as if something quite indispensable to human personality had been ruthlessly snatched away. Such a feeling arises not from the deprivation of an actual necessity, or indeed, of anything that ever really existed, but wholly from the loss of a mere notion. There is no faculty corresponding to a "will." The whole man is

Will. His will is not strong or weak in *general.* Every man is strong in resisting temptation and aggressive in action in some respects and terribly weak in others. The only *general* training the "will" can possibly receive is the general and constitutional building up of the whole man, by proper diet, proper exercise, baths, sleep, social intercourse, study, and religious worship, all done with a mind fixed upon the attainment of life more abundantly, and not upon the remorse for past failure or present imperfection.

Secondly, mention of "will" has been omitted from this discourse because, in the case of laziness, the whole man is attacked. It is just that peculiar thing popularly called "the will" that is hopelessly affected. If he could and did will to work, the lazy man would no longer be lazy. It is in the very citadel and core of his being that the lazy man suffers. Like a splendid locomotive fresh-painted and gleaming from the shops, but incapably dead for lack of power within, the lazy man stands equipped with brain, nerves, muscles and bones, ready for

gigantic tasks, but within him something falters and fails ignominiously.

Therefore, an appeal to the will in this case would be deceitfully futile. Throughout our discussion of the methods suggested to overcome the malady of indolence, we have not therefore suggested a frontal attack, but have indicated how by skirmishes and flank attacks the outworks of the Castle of Indolence could be taken and destroyed without risking the defeat of the "will" by a frontal charge ending possibly in disaster. For every decision of the will to reform which ends with defeat, simply intrenches more invincibly the evil attacked. The "will" must win every time if it would succeed at all.

Yet there are some forms of laziness which eventually compel direct attack. No physical defect, no cause in environment, no mental peculiarity can be marshaled to explain the inveterate idleness to be overcome. It is nothing more or less than an ingrained and long-fixed habit of physical idleness and mental indolence. Such laziness must be met with unflinching firm-

ness and overcome by a direct frontal attack.

But it must not be supposed that a man disarmed of his mythical "will" is therefore naked and helpless before such an enemy. Far from it. Indeed, once having laid aside the notion of a battle of wills and having come to a clear and scientific understanding of the operations of the human mind in such emergencies, a man is more ready than ever for the combat. The old-fashioned person, armed for such a struggle with a delusion about the efficacy of the will, has about as much chance of success as an archer attacking a modern machine gun, or a witch doctor saying incantations over yellow fever.

The true solution of overcoming any habit is found in what has been said about man's primary mental nature. Every bit of consciousness has inexorably linked up to it an impulse to act. The mind is connected with the muscles by nerves. Let the mind act ever so faintly and immediately through the nerves travels some mysterious and unknown energy which innervates the muscles.

All parts of human consciousness possess this gift—ideas as well as feelings, emotions, instincts, perceptions, memories, imaginings, phantasies—all bits of consciousness from the weakest to the strongest. If all, or a majority of the component parts of consciousness at any time exert their motive force toward the same action—if they push the same way—then that action takes place. If, as is often the case, sympathy pulls one way, a sense of duty pulls another, and prudence yet another, and ingrained and stubborn habit still another, doubt, distress, temptation and final succumbing result. A whining beggar holds out his emaciated hand imploring and sympathy commands "Give!" But a sense of duty to a creditor cries out "Withhold!" Prudence steps in with a "Caution! Impostor!" And while the would-be almoner stands motionless, behold, what a drama of exciting events is going on within his consciousness. It is only ended when prudence sides with duty to the creditor and the idea, "I must pay my debts first!" takes final charge of the brain, nerves and muscles, and by

their combined idea-motor force hurries the charitably minded away from the scene which arouses his sympathies.

But let us take an example, a classic one, and one nearer to our sensitive subject of laziness. Professor William James, that brilliant writer on science, has left an immortal description of the psychology of rising early in the morning, the agony of the desperate battle attaching thereto, and the processes by which the final victory is achieved. We will quote it in full from his "Principles of Psychology" in the chapter on "Will", page 524, because, as he says, it contains, "in miniature form, the data for an entire psychology of volition."

"Probably," he continues, "most persons have lain on certain mornings for an hour at a time, unable to brace themselves to the resolve. We think how late we shall be, how duties of the day will suffer; we say, 'I *must* get up, this is ignominious,' etc., but still the warm couch feels too delicious, the cold outside too cruel, and resolution faints away and postpones itself again and again just as it seemed on the verge of

bursting the resistance and passing over into the decisive act. Now how do we ever get up under such circumstances? If I may generalize from my own experience, we more often than not get up without any struggle or decision at all. We suddenly find that we *have* got up. A fortunate lapse of consciousness occurs; we forget both the warmth and the cold; we fall into some revery connected with the day's life, in the course of which the idea flashes across us, 'Hello! We must lie here no longer'—an idea which at that lucky instant awakens no contradictory or paralyzing suggestions, and consequently produces immediately its appropriate motor effects. It was our acute consciousness of both the warmth and the cold during the period of struggle which paralyzed our activity then and kept our idea of rising in the condition of *wish* and not *will.* The moment these inhibitory ideas ceased, the original idea exerted its effects."

From this and other experiences and experiments, this brilliant psychologist states the law of voluntary action as follows:

"We may then lay it down for certain that every representation of a movement awakens in some degree the actual movement which is its object; and awakens it in a maximum degree whenever it is not kept from so doing by an antagonistic representation present simultaneous in the mind."

This the idea will do without an act of will or fiat or mandate of any kind whatsoever. Let an idea once reign in consciousness and the effect is inevitable. "Let it once dominate," says Professor James, "let no other ideas succeed in displacing it, and whatever motor effects belong to it will inevitably occur." This is the law of voluntary action; this is the process that has displaced the old notion of a faculty called the "will." To state the truth succinctly and generally, *Whatever a man thinks, that he will do!*

Now that the mechanics of overcoming laziness is clear, what have we gained by it? First of all, this much: we have located the battle ground. It lies inside of us. Further, we have staked off its boundaries and de-

fined its limitations. We will waste no energy, then, in vainly seeking for some solution, for some power, outside of the exact area wherein now we know the battle must be ultimately fought out. "Make a conquest," said Saadi, "if thou art able, of the mind of one human being, that is, thyself." To this the wise and prudent Stoic, Seneca, the teacher of Nero, adds, "You must change yourself, not your abode. You may cross the sea, or as our Virgil says, 'Lands and cities may vanish from sight, yet wherever you go your vices will follow you.' When a certain person made the same complaint to Socrates, he answered, 'Why are you surprised that your travels do you no good, when you take yourself with you everywhere?'" Let the eye-weary longing for power to come from external circumstances cease, and, like a good general, let us study our inward battle ground and take account of our actual forces.

If ideas do immediately, by some unknown power which they possess, pull the trigger of action, why do some, or why does

one, idea finally prevail and result in action? This question is stridently pertinent when we are dealing with overcoming temptations of any kind, and especially when we are torn between the agonizing alternatives of lazily enjoying our luxurious inaction or of rising like a man and girding up our loins for some self-respecting task. How, then, shall we make the idea of work glow with dominating power? The answer sounds ridiculously simple. Professor James states it thus: "The essential achievement of the will, in short, when it is most 'voluntary' is to attend to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind." In other words, simply pay attention to the "work" we have to do, and pay attention so intently that every other consideration is excluded from the mind. Herein is the pith of decision. Stabilize in the mind the ideas of actions we wish to perform.

The process in general is this: Get a clear idea of what is to be done; then invest the idea with power to reign in consciousness. Let us take up the first process first. That will lead us into an inquiry as to the

origin of our ideas, and especially how it is that we accept certain ideas of life as right.

Life ideals come to us consciously or unconsciously. Many of them, like the air we breathe, are drawn in from our social atmosphere without effort, without even a consciousness of their presence. Yet they are life and death matters to our modes of living. Just as from the air sphere surrounding the whole earth we reflexly breathe in our portion of it and that portion vitalizes all our organic processes, just so from the great sphere of social custom we receive our individual notions of what is right and proper for ourselves. If we live in a land where it is considered disgraceful for men to soil their gentlemanliness with work, we shy away from work with the silent constancy of contrary magnetic poles. If, on the other hand, we live in a society saturated with the idea that idleness is disgraceful to an able-bodied man, we can hardly resist the constant pressure and find ourselves naturally and readily falling into the harness.

One of the first requisites, therefore, of

making a conscious conquest of laziness is to formulate a philosophy of life. Before a man can make a conquest of the promised land he must, Moses-like from Pisgah's peak, make a general survey. He must assemble his ideals of life, setting the God of Labor on one side and the God of Laziness on the other and demand of himself, "Choose you this day whom you will serve!" "If Laziness be god, follow him! If Labor be god, then follow him!" Let this be no momentary effusion of sentiment but the settled and calculated conviction of a man who has reflected deep and long upon the issue, and whose final conclusion is felt to be in entire harmony with the plan of the universe.

By such a contemplation and meditation alone victory may come and come suddenly. Psychological literature is full of instances of such sudden transformations of character. Sinful men win sudden victory over vices, over uncontrollable tempers, over prodigality and indolence. In his "Varieties of Religious Experiences", Professor James, quoted above, gives several illumin-

ating and heartening examples. One of them is the story of a young man born rich, who spent his early years in a riotous prodigality and an indolence which never went beyond the energy necessary to satisfy his lowest passions and crude amusements. One day he found himself ruined both in character and finances, penniless and without skill or habit that would earn a living. He wandered out into the country, to the brow of a hill overlooking the estates so recently lost to him by his wastefulness and sat there for hours brooding over his whole life, until suddenly there leaped into being the resolution to recover, by honest labor, all that he had lost.

Rising with immediate decision, he went into the town where he lived, came upon some coal on the sidewalk, offered to wheel it wherever it was to be stored, secured the job, and went to work at the first bit of real labor in all his wasted life. He received his pay, begged the gratuity of something to eat and drink, and thus added the cost of a meal to his wages. With unbroken persistency he pursued the same plan,

offering himself for the most servile work, performing it with diligence and dispatch, begging food, sleeping anywhere, and saving every penny, until he had secured enough to invest in some cattle, the prices of which he had studied. With caution and prudence, he sold the cattle, reinvested his gains, and eventually built up a business that regained all he had lost and added thereto a goodly fortune. This is but one example of the sudden seizure, by the process of meditation, of a new ideal upon a man's mind and the immediate transformation of that man into a totally new being. No laziness is so inveterate that this may not happen to the person of properly attuned emotional constitution.

After this conscious reflection upon the whole problem of conduct, and the definite decision made within the heart that a life of labor is the true one, then the next step is joining issue with the actual tasks at hand. The vision from the mountain top must not be exchanged for the realities of the valley. Thinking cannot be discarded, but it must now be concerned with details.

While general ideas possess enormous *suggestive* power, they possess little *directive* power. They initiate glorious actions and mighty movements. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" are slogans that move multitudes, fire them with burning emotion to do and to dare, and set them on tiptoe for action, but not until the definite cry, "On to the Bastile!" gives point and pith, direction and detail, to that accumulated idea-motor force, does the mob transform ideal into action.

To forswear with mighty oath all allegiance to laziness *in general* and vow utter loyalty to work *in general* is fatuous futility. Nobody with the best intentions in the world can spend a day working in general. He must work in particular; he must take up some definite task and do that. He can cut only one stick of wood, mow only one lawn, hoe only one row, sell to only one customer, write only one letter, at a time. Many a country boy, paralyzed at the enormity of digging an acre of potatoes, has, by resolutely fixing his attention upon one row at a time and digging that, accom-

plished the impossible! The contemplation of sorting a hundred bushels of apples lying in a pile is appalling, but it can be done by picking up one apple at a time.

A fabled grandfather's clock, to the consternation of its members, once came to a dead stop. Part began to incriminate part until they found the fault lay with the pendulum who had been brought to a standstill by calculating how many times he would have to tick in a hundred years! The indignation waxed hotter and hotter until the second hand pointed out that no matter how many millions of ticks there were in a century, the pendulum had one full second in which to do each tick! That thought started the whole works merrily on its way again.

Next, too many ideas lead to inaction. They neutralize each other. This is the peculiar temptation of the thinker. Whenever the idea of an action presents itself he reflects a moment or two; his eye perhaps wanders around speculatively and falls upon another duty undone. Or his mind begins to work and to find reasons why the

task should not be done *now*, but at some other more opportune time, say when some other necessity leads him in the particular direction which will give him a chance to kill two birds with one stone. That aphorism appeals profoundly to a thinker who attempts to order his daily life on a theory of economizing his forces. He hates useless expenditure and abhors a waste of time. Therefore, he generally feels like letting duties accumulate till they amount to a respectable heap before doing them. He would allow the dirty dishes to pile up after several meals so as to save getting hot water and utensils ready more than once. He is like the hardened fisherman along the coast who never will smack one mosquito at a time, but patiently wait until three or four light and so economize energy by making a big kill with one blow!

But such a logic of efficiency inevitably leads to the habit of temporizing. When the idea of one concrete task comes to mind, and a man begins to reflect upon it, he will always be reminded of another duty clamoring for attention, then another and

another, until the swarm of undone duties glowers blacker and blacker like a cloud of threatening vultures so vividly depicted by Longfellow:

> Never stoops the soaring vulture;
> On his quarry in the desert,
> On the sick and wounded bison,
> But another vulture watching
> From his high, aërial look-out,
> Sees the downward plunge and follows;
> And a third pursues the second
> Coming out of the invisible ether,
> First a speck and then a vulture,
> Till the air is black with pinions.

Black with the pinions of duties undone, tasks unfinished, high ideals unfulfilled! This is often the final melancholy state of one given to too much thinking.

There is just one way out; *Do it now!* The business executive has learned that necessity. To the thoughtful onlooker no man wastes more energy in a day than the business man. He seems to have no system of doing things. One after the other he takes them up in the order in which they come to him, here a bill for a few dollars,

there an enormous contract, now a minor fault to be corrected in an office boy, now a conference with a sales manager; to the unitiated onlooker, the theorist who envisages a day laid out according to some beautiful pattern made the night before in bed, it all looks like a miserable waste of good time and misspent energy. But the executive knows better. He has found that the way to get things done is to do them now, while they are hot, while his mind has this one thing to deal with and no other. Upon that item, big or little, he can concentrate his attention, get it done forever and aye, and bury it in the safe past, finished once and for all; or he can carry forward the project to a stage permitted by circumstances where he can take it up again at the proper time. "Get it done or report progress" is the demand he makes upon himself before his conscience. Consequently things move. He acquires the executive habit.

Temporizing to him is a frittering disease. In that he is right. Under the terms of human nature his method of work is correct.

Temporizing breeds thoughts; thoughts breed the habit of thinking; and a doer must not think. If a man must think, he should become a professor of philosophy, though that demands some talking; or a poet, though that demands some writing. Even a tramp is troubled by sheriffs.

Wait not for great moments to do the commonplace and the necessary. The NOW is the greatest moment in all the world, the one longed for by John T. Chapman's Prayer:

> O God, when the heart is warmest,
> And the head is clearest,
> Give me to act.
> To turn the purpose Thou formest
> Into fact.
> O God, when what is dearest
> Seems most dear,
> And the path before lies straight
> With neither Chance nor Fate
> In my career,—
> Then let me act.

Finally the idea must be positive. Mournful confessions of past omissions are

not effective. Lurking in every one of them is the tempting thought of the very thing to be avoided. "The thought of my pipe," said Billy Brae the English evangelist, who had sworn off from smoking, "nearly overcame me!" until the positive challenge "Worship me with clean lips" sounded its peremptory message of new hope through his soul. To struggle away from idleness is as futile as a sparrow's fluttering held transfixed by the basilisk fascination of a serpent's eye, or as the ludicrous struggles of a novice on a bicycle desperately intent upon avoiding the telegraph pole toward which he is inevitably drawn with seeming esoteric force.

To my mind, it is just these negative resolutions that have done much to obscure the law of idea-motor action. An abyss is assumed to yawn between ideas and acts, between dreaming and doing, between resolutions which insidiously pave the way to easier slipping downward and performances which lift the doer out of his slough of mire. These distinctions, conserved in aphorisms and mottoes, seem to testify against the

power of mere ideas to bring about individual reform.

But they do not so testify. For what prevents good resolutions from passing over into ripe fruition? What hinders ideas from transforming themselves into acts? Why, nothing but other ideas! Ideas that often lie unobserved in the consciousness of the penitent, covered over by the negatives associated with them, but nevertheless there with their idea-motor power. "*Do* not *do* that!" reveals by its form the latent fallacy of negative commands. It falls into two parts "Do not" and "Do that." The second idea when it is bulwarked by habit and reinforced by remembered pleasures wins over the first ideal standing barren cold, and alone, a virtue unclothed with habit and unadorned with past pleasures.

When, however, both ideas are stripped of such emotional associations and stand nakedly opposed, then both of their motive powers are equal, and indecision and inaction results. No actual human experience illustrates such perfect balance but the

philosophically whimsical fable alleges that once upon a time a perfectly logical donkey found himself precisely midway between two haystacks exactly alike; and since the idea of going to one was perfectly balanced by the idea of going to the other, and since the two ideas were mutually contradictory, the undecided donkey stood stock-still between the two stores of plenty till he starved to death!

Chapter X

Conquest by Siege

ONE of the saddest sights I ever saw was presented by the momentary struggle of a soul up to a vision of freedom and then its collapse and relapse back into lifelong imprisonment. The case was that of a young man about eighteen years old who through a birth injury had never walked. He had grown large, strong, handsome in appearance, with a fine mind lodged in a jerking, twitching body. All his life had been spent in bed or in a chair. He had never walked, run, climbed trees, swam, played, ridden a bicycle, hunted or fished, or participated in the thousand and one games and sports lively children play. His one pleasure was found in reading, which he taught himself.

The expert went over him thoroughly, rose after the examination and announced

that the boy could be made to walk. First, the scalpel of the surgeon must sever certain nerves. The jerking would then cease and perfect paralysis intervene. Next, education would begin by stimulating some small part of the body, say the toe, so that reflexly it would move. Gradually would come the idea of how it feels to move that toe. Then that idea, according to our theory of idea-motor action stated by Professor James above, would move that toe. Practice would enlarge the territory of voluntary movement; the contagion of action spreads; the whole foot moves, then the other; then the legs and arms, and in some months, the man is in command of his whole body and moves and walks and runs at the Self's direction. By such a course of treatment would a sound, up-standing, strong man take the place of this pitiful cripple.

The boy heard the story through. For an instant his whole being lighted as the new powers spread themselves out before his imagination. Then the light of his eye died out; his eager face relaxed; he settled

back. What did this walking mean, anyhow? He had never tasted its extolled delights, never experienced the untrammeled pleasures of going and coming as he pleased; and yet he had his small joys, satisfying to him, relatively large and consuming, filling his small world with their bounty and abundance. Why should he learn laboriously to walk? So, after his one glimpse of a paradise which we who know its joys would have taken infinite pains to enter, this poor boy complacently sank back in his wheeled chair, and was rolled out of the room to a life of crippled inaction self-chosen in the face of escape.

If only some one could have given that boy just an instant's taste of the magnificent joyousness of locomotion, he would not have hesitated a moment. No sacrifice would have been too great to make that joy permanent. But—and here is the rub in so much reformation—he could neither recall from memory nor frame in his imagination vividly enough the idea of walking to make it decisive in the situation. He could not comprehend the whole circle of

actions and feelings involved. Walking, to him, was but a skeletal idea, with no flesh on its bare bones, no throbbing life in it, no rich, red blood racing through it, no multitude of pleasures hanging to it like purple grapes in the sun. Here lies the crux of reform: How shall an idea beget such power?

Clearly the problem is one of, first, suppressing enticing emotions associated by long practice with a now rejected course of action; secondly, of arousing new and agreeable emotions; thirdly, associating these with a course of action contemplated in idea. The idea itself possesses its own motive power, let us never forget that. It needs the reinforcement of powers attaching also to emotions. How to arouse these emotions is the problem. Can a man feel what he pleases to feel?

Emotions are not directly under control of the "will." Indeed, the intense feelings are notoriously beyond all control, and sometimes like a hurricane of flame sweep over the judgment of their possessor and drive him into acts he bitterly repents.

Nevertheless, they are *indirectly* under his command; and their suppression or arousal can be made matters of habit. The secret of such control over these wild forces of our being lies in the theory of their origin.

All emotions, according to the well-accepted James-Lange theory, are bundles of feelings in consciousness which come there because of muscle contractions. Every contraction of every muscle is accompanied by its own peculiar feeling. The contraction of the internal-organ muscles—those of the diaphragm, the heart, the viscera, the capillaries—all pour into consciousness their flood of feelings fused and commingled together, and these complexes of feelings are called emotions. Whatever causes muscle changes, causes emotions. Objects cause them; other feelings cause them; ideas like bad or good news, ghost stories, sales talks, commands, exhortations—all ideas and every idea arouse to some degree some feeling, by working on the muscles.

Since ideas have this power the very first method of arousing emotions in association with some ideal of conduct is

deliberate reflection. We have given one instance above of the young man who lost and regained his ancestral estates. Several hours' reflection was all that was necessary to arouse in him desires strong enough to last the rest of his life. Reflection, meditation and prayer have been the ideal molders of feeling and conduct in nearly all the great religions of the world.

Such contemplation of any project is a species of inspiration. It consists in surrounding the idea of the project with a halo of feelings by reflecting upon the rewards and joys of labor. From every possible source the rewards of work are summoned before the mind's eye. All its pleasures, direct and indirect, are analyzed and ferreted to their source. Money comes from work; it will buy many things; it will buy that thing now so desirable. Besides money, work gives permanent rewards; it makes friends; it accumulates respect; it confers power; these and endless other rewards follow in its train, and each one of them has in prospect the power of irradiating through the consciousness of the

prospective worker ripples of pleasure that can eventually gather in one great overwhelming wave of enthusiasm for doing something worth while in the world.

This method leads to developing the power to take the initial plunge, to make that decision which puts a man in a position where the force of circumstances, the appeals to pride, the desire for gain, for praise, for self-satisfaction, for the answer of a good conscience, for the satisfaction of something well done, all come in to make permanent and abiding the first critical committal to work.

Possibly no better described temporizing and final decision on a momentous question can be found in all literature than that of St. Augustine's in his "Confessions." The best of it is the fact that it is a leaf taken out of real life. St. Augustine has led what at best is called a worldly life. He has surrendered himself to the pleasures of his time with the libertinism accorded young men of his day. The influence of his saintly mother is forever urging him toward a better life. His objections to entering the

Church are first intellectual. These hindrances he gradually removes by reflection. Then comes the real battle. He sees before him a higher, cleaner, nobler existence than any he has lived; he longs to take the final step that will make that life his own; on the brink of decision he stands like a swimmer dreading the cold plunge. In him rises the vision, behind him lie the memories of alluring pleasures; he hesitates, almost decides, draws back on the verge, writhes in bodily agony; decides in his mind and holds back in his mind, wondering at the terrible mystery which allows mind to rule body, but refuses to allow it power over itself. The idea of a new life, he sees clearly, beckons him forward; the chains of habit, made silken soft by sensuous pleasures, hold him struggling to the spot. He personifies both in the form of his earlier companions and in the form of Chastity, the former beseeching him not to desert them; the latter gazing upon him with a clear, confident smile. At last he takes the step; the die is cast; his long life in the Church tells the rest.

After the method of reflection comes the method of mimicry. Remembering that emotions are muscle feelings and that we have direct control over many—or all—of the grosser, external muscles, we may throw them into a state correlated with the emotion we desire. Posture is such a maker of emotion. The posture of victory may be assumed even when deadly fear is beating at a man's soul, and then fear has no power utterly to overcome him. The boy who whistles all the way through the graveyard after dark sets up a counter-motion against the fright clutching at his heart, and maintains his courage above the breaking point. The man of good resolve, who, with knees back, hips back, chest out, chin down, jaw set, corners of mouth up, eye twinkling, face wearing a confident smile, draws himself up to his full height and takes in deep, full convincing breaths, fortifies his good resolutions with the congruent feelings of victory.

In spite of the practical reader's first revulsion from this make-believe posing, there is much more in it than self-deception;

more even than self-fabricated emotion, inspiring as that may really be; and still more than a mere impulse to action, pregnantly critical as that may be. It is actually the beginning of action. In miniature, the life of labor has really begun. As in the case of delectable viands, a foretaste of their pleasures can be gained from their aroma, which sets the salivary glands to acting, and tones up the muscles with expectation, so the mimicry of victory over laziness gives a foretaste and a foreknowledge of the real joys of work. The idea of labor is robing itself in the enticing garments of delight and changing itself from an abhorrent skeletal thing into a warm-breathing inspiration to high endeavor. In such hidden vortices of struggle, taking place in the mind, over small things, often hidden from sight and sound by the uproar of the mightier contest over laziness and labor in general, is the real battle fought out and the real victory won.

For the final supreme struggle let us once more survey our powers and see how we must deploy our forces to carry our tri-

umph to complete victory. First of all and always, ideas possess inherent and indeterminable power to initiate action and to direct action. Great, general ideas covering long series of actions lasting through a long period are called "Ideals" of life. Calm, deliberate, unhurried meditation upon a life of laziness in contrast with a life of labor reveals without a shadow of doubt the worth of the labor-life. This, then, is the first step toward conquest. Then follows the kind of thinking that reveals the necessity for positive, concrete, immediate action in the small things of every day. Next, to initiate such action over and over until habit is established, it is necessary to invest the ideas of doing tasks with the emotional glow. The lazy man must learn to love labor! That, in brief, is the stupendous undertaking set for him. To tell him how is our task. Much of it we have told him already. He must reflect upon the rewards of labor, mimic the posture of the conqueror over self, foretaste by imagination and by incipient beginnings the very pleasures that labor, wholesome, self-re-

spect-giving, personality-uniting labor will give. Now we have brought him to the very threshold of action, real action.

No man, however sodden in indolence, is totally inactive. Some duties he does daily. He may hate each and every one of them; but he does them. This association of hatred with them is a habit. Through weary years of gnawing and torturing indolence, he has forged a solid link between the thought of an action and the hatred of it. From such a process ending in such humiliating slavery he can learn the way of escape. If he can associate hatred with work, he can also associate love with labor. To do it, he need not agonize; need not plunge into some hand-blistering, brutalizing, agonizing menial performance. All he needs to do is, by reflection, to come to the ideals of life mentioned above, and then invest each and every small duty he is now doing with the glory shed upon it from that larger ideal.

When such a task is performed as a part of a whole system determined upon and counted good, it is itself invested with a

meaning and an emotion altogether different from the same task done as a piece of hated but necessary drudgery. How infinitely removed is the debasing ditch-digging of the laborer from the trench-digging of the soldier; of the kitchen-floor scrubbing of a domestic from the soldier-hut floor-scrubbing of a countess! Yet the actual muscular operation is the same. It is the light never seen on land or sea, that is shed from the vision of a Life-Ideal that changes the aspects of such duties. Then let the conquering man who *does* do some things daily act in these necessary matters with the conciousness of a full devotion to a magnificient enterprise, the making of a man, fuller than the Crusader's empty tomb, infinitely richer than a Holy Grail. Slowly at first, but with increasing acceleration will the feeling of conquering manhood come into the doer's mind as a solid and abiding satisfaction. Daily habit fixes these values firmer and firmer in the sinew and bone of him. Some day he will stand upon his own two feet, stretch out before his eyes two strong arms ending in ten skilled fingers,

backed by a well-trained brain, and like the young initiate into the tribal rights, or the youth just knighted, take his place, in the full consciousness of earned equality with those who are doing the world's work. This is the minimum essential of self-respecting manhood in America. To this, time and habit will add the crown of loving work more than anything else in the world.

This last assertion may sound extravagant to many. It so sounds because work has long been robbed of its essential birthright —the joy of labor. Many agencies are responsible for this conspiracy to defraud. But they all pursue the same method. By subtle suggestion they deprive labor of its sweetest reward. These insidious workers of unconscious iniquity, besides associating work on the one hand with its necessary and inherent hardships, and on the other with its legitimate and sure rewards, have increased the pains and diminished the pleasures of toil by adding insult to injury in the shape of purest fictions. They have stamped labor with the imprint of shame, and have placed the workingman, the

noblest work of God, in a lower social caste than the elegant indolent who has been awarded a state essentially higher and finer because he never soils his hands with aught but the "frivolous work of polished idleness." How much the common worker feels this can be guessed only by those who have stood in his shoes.

> The toad beneath the harrow knows,
> Exactly where each tooth-point goes.
> The butterfly beside the road,
> Preaches contentment to that toad.

When the president of one of our great universities told an audience of workingmen that they should enjoy their daily occupations, his very true and possible statement was greeted with a spontaneous burst of derisive laughter. Those men had been robbed by pure suggestion of a very real pleasure. Probably, had each one enumerated his objections to his work, not one of them would have named an objection inherent in the actual manual operation required by his job. In his bill of particulars however, in all probability, he

would have entered his sense of injustice because he was robbed of the *ease* which, he had been taught to believe, is the birthright of every man. "Adam's curse" is the thing that often rankles most in the breast of a man who ought to be one of the proudest beings because he shares in that blessing disguised by the world's false teaching.

A certain kind of theology has not always been free from that undercurrent of suggestion which strips work of much of its richness of satisfaction. Not only the story of the curse of a sweaty brow laid upon man for his sin, but the belief in a hereafter actionless as a "painted ship upon a painted ocean" encourages an ideal of complete escape from labor as the rightful heritage of man. Hymnology, perhaps, rather than Scripture, is responsible for some of these sentiments. The refrain,

> Work for the night is coming,
> When man's work is done!

when closely scanned as to meaning, carries a dolorous message of present compulsion and future stagnation.

Epitaphs have added their quota to the suggestion. Part of one, said to come from an English graveyard, gives the last message of "a woman who always was tired," and ends with:

> Don't mourn for me now,
> Don't mourn for me ever
> I'm going to do nothing,
> Forever and ever!

Requiescat in pace! May she rest in peace, and with her all others like-minded!

Other more zestful singers, with stops open and victory in their words, have sung a more glorious song. Fichte, the philosopher, with his "*Alles ist streben!*" everything is in the striving, agrees with Pope:

> Honor and shame from no condition rise
> Act well thy part, there all the honor lies.

The peace of progress, like that mentioned by the American soldier who said, "Peace to me means charging through the Argonne Forest after being in the trenches for three weeks!" flings out its challenging note in lines like these:

What peace could ever be to me,
So sweet as struggling life?
What blissful immortality,
Like strife that strives with strife?

And the ring of experienced victory comes clamoring from the pen of Angela Morgan in a poem too long to quote except a small part:

Work!
Thank God for the swing of it,
For the hammering, clamoring ring of it!
Passion of labor daily hurled
On the mighty anvil of the world.
What is so fierce as the flame of it?
What is so huge as the aim of it?
Thundering on through dearth and doubt
Calling the plan of the Maker out.
Work, the Titan, work the friend,
Shaping the world to a glorious end.
Work!
Thank God for a world where none may shirk.
Thank God for the splendor of work!

Only those who have toiled "not as a galley slave scourged to his dungeon" but as free men born, who, like Marcus Aurelius rousing himself to each new day's adventur-

ing with the challenge, "I am rising to a man's work!" have the right to enter into the spirit of such a song.

If we must reach over into the beyond for our inspiration here, let us bring back a message of that eternal felicity which can be found only in a labor of love, begun here and carried on there, where:

> Only the Master shall praise us,
> And only the Master shall blame
> And no one will work for money,
> And no one will work for fame,
> But each for the love of working,
> And each in his separate star
> Shall paint the thing as he sees it
> For the God of things as they are.

The testimony of sages, the confidence of that Teacher who said, "My father worketh even until now and I work;" the order of Nature which science asserts is ultimately motion, the constitution of man himself, which testifies that he is built for action, all conspire to prove that the song of the man who works is in tune with the universe.

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